COASTING'S SPORT AND PERIL DESCRIBED!

FRANK MANLEY'S WEEKLY.

GOOD STORIES OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906 by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 23. NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 9, 1906. Price 5 Cents.

FRANK MANLEY'S BIG MISTAKE;

OR, THE FEARFUL CRASH AT BRADFORD.

By "PHYSICAL DIRECTOR"

The disaster was smashing, fearful, complete! Cries of agony greeted Death as it hovered near. The flower of two athletic clubs had crashed in that catastrophe. "No excuse!" moaned Manley.

Frank Manley's Weekly

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CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF THE DEVIL WAGON.

"It's the greatest coast in the world!"

"That's fun."

"Sport!"

"But, oh, the long walk back!"

"That's exercise."

"What was this club founded for?" growled Joe Prescott. "Fun, sport and exercise! The Woodstock Junior Athletic Club was founded with those three objects."

Frank Manley laughed.

"Come along, Humph!" he called. "You're not the fellow to balk at a mile and a half walk after a coast like that."

"I suppose we could draw him up the hill on the double-runner," suggested Hal Spofford, his voice deep with sarcasm.

Six boys were out in the night for one of the great times of the winter.

The snow, not a very deep one in the first place, was now four days old. Sleighs and pungs had worn a smooth track. Boys, with their sharp sleds and big double-runners, had rubbed the tracks like glass.

There was now the grandest coasting that any boy in or around Woodstock could remember.

Of course, there were grown-up men, who hadn't coasted for a dozen years, who could remember better coasting.

But then, of course, there are always grown-up men who can remember things that beat out the experience of any boy.

For miles around every hill that was near, many homes resounded with the shouts and laughter of youngsters coasting.

But these members of the Woodstock Club, the Up and At 'Em Boys, famous wherever junior athletics are followed, had gone out of the beaten track for coasting.

Frank Manley was there with his own big, handsome, strong, swift double-runner. With him, of course, was his lieutenant and chum, Hal Spofford.

Equally, of course, Joe Prescott, second lieutenant of the club, was there. So was Joe's running mate in the Biff Twins, big and hard-hitting Lon Humphrey.

Jackets Winston, the youngest and smallest, but one of the cleverest athletes in the club, was also of the party.

Finally, there was Dick Foster, head and brains of the Trouble Trio, that always went nosing for difficulties.

Just after an early supper they had hurried out of Woodstock, up the long road over the hill and past the Dunstan

house, to a point about a quarter of a mile beyond the Dunstan place.

From this latter point they had coasted down the slopes toward Barberville.

With Manley in front, at the steering wheel, Joe and Hal had given the big preliminary shove and then jumped on at the rear.

It was nothing less than a grand coast. The road sloped downward nearly all of the way.

At only one point was it necessary for Hal and Joe to jump off and give a slight amount of pushing.

The whole coast was more than a mile and a half in length.

But now they faced the task of walking up the hill again.

To draw the double-runner was nothing in the way of work. Two youngsters at a time could handle the novel vehicle with ease.

"The lamp is out," discovered Humphrey.

"No matter. There are water and carbide enough, and we can light it again before we start down hill," replied Manley, after a moment's examination of the acetylene gas lamp—one of the big ones that they had taken from the club's iceboat, and which was now fitted in place at the front of the double-runner.

Frank and Hal were hauling at the rope, the other fellows trailing along behind when Joe called out:

" 'Ware the devil wagon!"

Toot! toot!

Behind them, coming from Barberville way, were the glaring search-lights of a big touring automobile.

It was coming toward them rather slowly, as if there was difficulty in making the wheels "bite" on the smooth track of ice and snow.

As Frank and his friends stepped to the side of the road the auto went by at leisurely speed.

No sooner was the "devil wagon" past them, however, than Frank Manley made a sudden leap forward.

As Frank darted in behind the auto he espied a towing hook at the rear.

To this he made the hauling rope of the double-runner fast in a twinkling, tying by a noose so that he could cast off at any moment.

Then he turned to signal to the other boys, who had broken in a jog alongside.

In an instant they piled down on the double-runner, then arranged themselves for a comfortable "tow" up the long hill.

"Bully!" chuckled Hal, who had plumped himself down into a seat just behind Frank.

"It beats walking," smiled Manley.

Almost at the outset the chauffeur of the devil wagon succeeded in getting more speed out of his car.

Manley's hands kept close touch with the steering wheel of his double-runner. It was necessary for him to watch what he was doing, or the double-runner could be easily swerved into an upset and the six youngsters sent flying from the wreck.

But the other Up and At 'Em Boys had confidence in Manley. They did not worry about upsets, but settled down to the enjoyment of this unexpected haul up the hill.

"Thirty-nine thousand six hundred and fifty-four," read Manley from the tag on the back of the automobile. "Wonder who owns the machine?"

When the auto had passed them the boys had noticed that another man sat beside the chauffeur. In the rear seat were two other passengers.

More than that the boys had not noted. The hood of the car was on, and, though there were glass panels in the sides and at the rear, it was so dark inside the car that the rear passengers were but dimly visible.

Now, as the chauffeur put on more efforts for speed, the escape of gasoline vapor was such as to almost choke the young coasters behind.

But Manley gave a sudden, gasping start, caused by something very different from gasoline.

For, having glanced again at the license tag at the rear of the auto, he now read:

"Seven thousand and sixty-four."

"That's mighty funny," he gasped. "I'm sure the number began with a 'three' a moment ago.

Then he laughed:

"Of course the number hasn't changed. How could it?"

Yet the thing haunted him.

The more he thought about it the more certain he was that the first number had begun with a "3," and that there had been five numerals. It was equally certain that the license number now displayed began with a "7," and that it contained but four numerals.

"Whew!" sputtered Hal, as he got another strong whiff of the gasoline. "Better cut loose. That's what Joe says, too."

"Not yet," Frank retorted, rather sharply.

"Why, we'd rather walk than——" Hal began, but Manley cut him short.

"Hal, there's something more than a question of walking now."

"What?"

Frank did not answer. He did not have to.

For just at that instant one of the passengers on the rear seat thrust a revolver close to the head of his fellow-passenger.

Over the rattle of the machinery and the crunch of the snow and ice it was impossible to hear any words spoken in the car.

But both boys fancied they heard the rumble of an angry voice and a shriek of fear.

Hal nudged Joe, who passed the signal back.

In an instant six boys were very wide-awake to the fact that something decidedly lively was taking place in the car ahead.

Bump! Manley, in his excitement, had forgotten his steering wheel for a few seconds.

Swirl! As the auto went swiftly and obliquely across the road the double-runner rode on one side.

There was a little yell of dismay. The boys held on as best they could, expecting to be thrown off every second.

It was a lively problem for a few seconds whether the double-runner could be kept right side up.

Manley managed with coolness and skill. A few seconds more, and the little vehicle was running on all its runners again.

Once more Frank glanced up at the big glass panel in the rear of the hood.

The man with the pistol was still holding the weapon against the other man's head.

But the holder of the weapon had risen to his feet, steadying himself with his left hand.

"Careful!" shouted Manley. "You can't kill without having witnesses see you!"

He had expected his voice to carry confusion to the assailant ahead, but in another instant Manley realized that his voice had not carried above the roar and rattle of the machinery.

They had reached the top of their coasting hill, now, but to that Frank gave never a thought.

"Going to cast off?" Hal called in his ear.

"Say, what do you think?" Frank retorted. "Cast off—with that ahead?"

"I didn't believe you would," Spofford muttered.

"Then you guessed right, son!"

CHAPTER II.

A HOUSEFUL OF MYSTERY THIS TIME.

Switch! The auto turned a corner, going up a cross-road at high speed.

Manley, on the alert this time, and half expecting the turn, piloted the double-runner safely around the bend.

Now, on a good, level road, the machine whizzed.

It would have been grandly exhilarating sport had not the attention of the boys been chained on the tragedy ahead.

Manley, just at the moment, was giving his whole attention to the steering gear. But Hal kept him posted.

"There!" breathed Spofford. "All right, now, I guess. The fellow with the gun has put it up without shooting, and has sat down again."

Frank glanced up once more. As he did so he gave another jump.

His glance, passing over the license tag, now read the numerals:

"Nine hundred and three."

"Great Scott, Hal!" he quivered back, at his chum, "this is a mighty queer auto. The license number has changed at least twice since we hitched on."

"How could it?" Spofford demanded, incredulously.

"It has done it, just the same."

Hal said no more, but read the number, then determined to use his own eyes if the ride lasted long enough.

If? Hal did not doubt that the ride would last a good deal longer. Manley, having gotten on the track of a mystery such as this auto carried, was not likely to drop it until the finish.

But now, over a lonely country road, the auto whizzed along noisily for fully two miles without anything else happening.

"Whatever the trick was, it missed fire," grunted Hal.

"Wait!" Manley called back, drily.

"That might have been a joke, old fellow."

"Jokes don't often happen that way."

"How much further are you going to hold on?"

"I don't know."

"The joke'll be on us," grimaced Hal, "if we have to walk back ten miles to-night."

"It wouldn't be the first time we had walked that far," Frank retorted, drily.

"He's going to keep on," Hal called back to Joe.

"Of course he is," nodded Prescott. "Did you ever know Frank Manley to turn back when there was excitement ahead?"

"Are we going to keep right on?" Dick Foster called in Joe's ear.

"So I understand."

"Glad of it! I seem to smell trouble in the air to-night."

"It's going to be worth while, Hal, old fellow," Joe chuckled in Spofford's ear. "The chairman of the Trouble Trio scents mischief ahead. Dick's nose is keen on those kind of smells."

"Can he smell the gasoline, then?" Hal demanded, ironically.

It was Spofford's turn to jump a moment later.

For the license tag on the automobile displayed a new number:

"Seventeen thousand five hundred and eighty-six."

"Great Scott!" quivered Hal.

"What's wrong?" demanded Joe.

"The number on that tag changes every mile or so."

"Sure sign there's something unusual afloat to-night," nodded Joe.

Crack! bang!

Every one of the six boys nearly jumped off the double-runner as those two shots rang out sharply in the car ahead.

From the auto itself, however, there came no sign of what had happened. The car went on at the same speed, down that lonely road. Both of the men in the rear seats could still be seen.

"We'll be near Bradford soon," Frank announced.

"Another mile on this road will take us into town," Hal replied.

"There's the Henderson place ahead," nodded Frank, looking toward a big country estate at his left.

Mr. Henderson was an elderly widower, a wealthy but little seen man, who kept up this great mansion in the country in addition to a town house in New York.

In winter, Mr. Henderson was believed to spend his time about equally between town and country.

"Our birds are going to stop there!" throbbed Frank, suddenly, as he realized a very great slowing down in the speed of the touring car behind which they were trailing.

Yet Frank waited until he saw the auto turn in toward the side of the road.

Then, in a jiffy he cast off, calling:

"Drag your feet, fellows! Stop her!"

The double-runner came to a quick halt.

Manley was up like a flash, signalling to the others.

In silence, but swiftly, they lifted the double-runner, rushing with it to the stone wall and dropping it on the other side among the trees.

In a twinkling they followed their coasting vehicle over the wall, crouching behind it on the Henderson lawn.

They were hardly two hundred feet from the front gate of the place, where the devil wagon now rolled to a slow stop.

Crouching, but watching, the boys saw four men leave the automobile.

Laughing and chatting, and without the least sign of stealth, this quartette walked steadily along the driveway, something less than two hundred feet to the house.

Up the steps of the big, gray-stone mansion they went. One of the number fitted a key in the outer lock of the door and they entered.

"Friends of Mr. Henderson," muttered Hal, half disappointedly. "Probably he's one of the men."

"Then why do they leave the car out at the side of the road?" asked Jackets. "Why didn't they drive it right up to the front entrance?"

"Search me!" muttered Joe.

Manley was over the wall like a flash.

Staring after him for a moment, the others concluded to follow.

They found Frank staring in at the inside of the car.

"I don't understand those shots," he muttered. "Apparently no one was hurt, for there's no victim here."

"Not a thing except a bad smell," retorted Hal, "and the power still up and ready."

"They're going further, those men," Frank declared.

"At least, some of them are," Joe supplemented.

"I don't know whether they are or not," Frank muttered, thoughtfully.

He had drawn out his pocket-knife slowly, and now opened one of the blades.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Joe, quickly.

"Wondering whether to cut the tire," Manley replied, quietly.

"That would at least be risky," thrilled Hal.

"You mean in case these men are all right?"

"Yes. What right would you have to cut their tire, then?"

"All right," sniffed Dick Foster, coming forward from the rear of the car. "Humph! When men are all right, why do they go out in an auto that is rigged with a device for changing the license number every little way."

"Have you been examining that thing?" Frank asked, quickly.

"Yes. Come back and look at it for yourself."

The entire sextette went.

"See that sort of box?" demanded Dick, pointing to a thick metal receptacle back of the license tag. "See how a new number can slip down in place of the old one? I haven't been able to figure it out, quite, but when this machine is moving, some automatic device changes the number on the tag once in so often."

"Men who have a scheme like that for throwing other-off the scent of their license number are breaking the law," declared Manley, quietly. "If they'd do it in one thing, they would in another."

As he spoke he thoughtfully closed the open blade of his knife, opening, instead, another blade that was shaped like a long, narrow bodkin.

With this latter, sharp implement, he bored directly into the nearer rear tire.

This done, he bored twice more in other parts of the tire.

The Up and At 'Em Boys looked on in eager, rather startled interest.

"Perhaps I've broken the law, now," said Manley, calmly. "More likely I've helped it. This tire still holds, and probably will until the machine has gone perhaps a quarter of a mile. And now—what's going on in that big house yonder?"

As he looked toward the house the other youngsters looked also.

But Manley did more than look. An instant later he was going up the driveway at a good, stiff jog.

Without a word the others followed.

At the front steps Manley halted.

He listened for a few moments, then stole off around the base of the veranda toward the north.

It was his plan to circle the house, listening intently for any sound there might be of mischief.

Yet hardly had he and those behind him gained the north end of the house when they heard the front door on the west open.

The boys crouched down behind the veranda.

Through the doorway a flood of light poured, for an instant, on the same four men they had seen going into the house.

They were laughing and chatting as before. Now each one carried a dress-suit case. All of the four still had on their caps and goggles, or had replaced them.

"What a fine disguise those caps and goggles make," Manley muttered to himself.

Still laughing and chatting, these four men strode off down the driveway, though walking more briskly than they had done before.

"Shall we follow them?" wondered Frank. "We could down them, if they didn't use firearms. But we don't know that they've done anything wrong. Now, if I could only see Mr. Henderson. He's a straight man. If he says the thing is all right——"

But with Manley, to get the right idea was to act like a flash.

Nimbly as a monkey he climbed up the veranda rail, darting down the veranda to the front door, which still stood open.

"That's mighty queer, too," he muttered, as he sped. "Folks generally close a door after them."

The house was as still as a tomb when the six boys glided into the broad hallway.

Down at the gate the sudden chugging of the auto showed that a start was being made.

"Those fellows won't get far," Frank smiled back at the chums with him. "But where can Mr. Henderson—or any one—be in this silent house?"

Down the hallway a door at the left stood open. Without more delay Frank strode toward this door.

He and his friends stepped quickly into the room—a large and well-filled library.

It was the library of a man of wealth, and of taste in art and books. But that fact interested Manley little at the present moment.

He was about to decide that the library was empty of human beings other than these young athletes themselves, when a groan sounded from a far corner of the room.

Then a man—old, gray and haggard, thin and bent, rose from a chair and tottered toward them.

"Mr. Henderson!" Frank exclaimed.

"You? You young men? What are you doing here?" demanded the old man, affrightedly.

"Mr. Henderson," Frank answered, quickly, "we thought something was wrong here, and we came in to see."

"Wrong?" faltered the old man, clutching at a chair-back to steady himself. "Wrong? Yes—wrong, indeed! Robbed of jewels, of bonds, of cash, and——"

"We can overtake the thieves, sir!" cried Frank, turning toward the door. "They're not far away. They can't get far away!"

But with a speed and nimbleness that would not have been looked for in this trembling old man, Mr. Henderson darted forward.

"No, no, no!" he shouted, hoarsely. "Don't stop the thieves!"

Manley recoiled, aghast.

"Don't stop the thieves?" he repeated to himself. "Jingo! This is a whole houseful of mystery!"

CHAPTER III.

"SAFE DEPOSIT."

"I mean," the old man explained, in faltering accents, "that I don't wish you to risk your lives in my behalf. Those wretches are armed—desperate. They wouldn't respect a human life that got between them and flight."

"Perhaps not," Frank answered, coolly. "But this isn't the first time that we have met people of that kind. And I tell you, Mr. Henderson, that we can catch up with the thieves before long. They can't go far. We fixed one of the tires of their automobile."

"You mustn't go," insisted the old man, weakly. "I forbid it. Besides, this is my affair—my loss—and I have the right to command."

"That automobile must have broken down by this time, sir," Frank reminded him. "If the rogues have taken to their legs, every minute is helping them to get further away."

"You mustn't go. I forbid it. It is my affair," the old man insisted. "I will telephone the police. I will do it at once. In the meantime, if you wish to see——"

Clutching Manley by the sleeve, Mr. Henderson dragged our hero around to the other side of a tall Japanese screen.

There, in the wall, was the open door of a great steel vault.

"Look in there. See how complete the wreck has been!" cried Mr. Henderson, pushing Frank toward the wide-open door of the vault. "You may look, all of you. There is nothing of value left. The scoundrels, with a pistol at my head, forced me to open my own vault. They have rifled it well. Look—examine—while I hurry to telephone the police. Stay here, I beg you. Perhaps you can help me. Look this over all of you, please."

In his feverish haste, and seemingly half demented by his great loss, Mr. Henderson all but shoved the last of the six boys into the great vault.

Then they heard his hurried steps as he hastened to another part of the house.

"Say, is this queer?" muttered puzzled Joe.

"That old man is!" grunted Foster.

Frank was looking about him in the great vault. Its inside dimensions were at least eight feet by twelve, and it was fully nine feet high.

Around on the sides were shelves, on which rested account books, boxes of papers and no small amount of heavy silverware.

This latter valuable property the thieves had disdained to carry away.

But at the back of the vault was a smaller vault, the heavy steel doors of which now hung wide open.

Inside this smaller vault were some twenty little recesses, in each one of which a metal bond box had rested.

But now these boxes, opened and looted, lay thrown about on the steel floor of the main vault.

"They took every single thing out of these bond boxes," muttered Frank, turning the boxes over and inspecting each in turn. "Probably they didn't stop to inspect what they were taking, for they came out of the house again so soon."

"Now we have an idea of what was in those dress-suit cases," uttered Joe, almost breathlessly.

"It must have been a tremendous haul," quivered Hal. "Henderson is reputed to be very rich, and, of course, he wouldn't have had a vault of such size in his house if he hadn't had articles of great value to store here."

"Isn't there a single clew left here?" demanded Joe.

"That's what I'm looking for," declared Manley, still busily turning over the boxes, while the other boys crowded around him, looking eagerly on.

"Well, with those rascals forced to leave a broken-down auto and take to their legs, the police ought to be able to catch them before the night is over," hinted Hal.

"Yes," retorted Frank. "If——"

He paused.

"Well?" insisted Hal, breathlessly.

"If the police are notified," Manley finished, coolly.

"But Mr. Henderson has gone to telephone the police," Spofford protested.

"That's what he said," Frank retorted.

"Good heavens! Do you mean to say that the man would not report a loss like this?"

"That was just the impression that I got."

Hal stared in bewilderment at his chum.

"See here, Frank, this isn't any fake robbery. Henderson was scared and worried to death. A look at his face was enough to show that."

"I admit that."

"Then, why on earth shouldn't a man report a loss so great as this one must have been?"

"I don't know."

"Yet you think he isn't sending word to the police?"

"I'd like to bet that he isn't," was Manley's decisive answer.

"You believe the robbery was genuine?"

"Yes."

"And yet," cried Hal, "you think Mr. Henderson too crazy to report a genuine loss to the police. Why?"

"I don't know."

"Well, it won't take us long to find out whether the Bradford police are notified," grunted Joe.

"That's a subject in which I shall take a good deal of interest," went on Frank, as he straightened up and began to look over the recesses from which the bond boxes had been taken.

"What's your theory of this, then?" Hal insisted.

"I haven't any—yet," Manley admitted. "But every circumstance of this affair is worse than strange. This is a real house of mystery. Ah, here are some papers the thieves left in their hurry."

Frank picked up the bundle of documents, examining their backings curiously.

"Nothing but ordinary legal papers," he observed.

A mocking laugh from the vault door startled the absorbed boys.

Yet before they could turn the heavy outer steel door swung.

Bang!

The lock of the great door had clicked, shutting off all light and leaving the startled boys in utter darkness.

With a cry of alarm Frank pushed his way through his friends to the steel door.

There was no lock, no knob on the inside, as he found after desperate fumbling.

"All together!" he cried. "See if we can force the door open!"

But their combined assault failed to swing the great steel barrier open.

"Tricked! Trapped!" groaned Frank Manley.

Then Joe's grim voice sounded in the close darkness:

"Locked up in safe deposit until we're needed!"

CHAPTER IV.

IN A LIVING TOMB.

"Who could have done this thing?" quivered Hal.

"Mr. Henderson?" breathed Foster.

"Hardly," retorted Frank.

"Why do you say that?" groaned Foster.

"Because he's a gentleman, or I'm greatly mistaken," Frank replied.

"Then, who?"

"The thing is," Frank broke in again, "how are we to get out of here?"

A chorus of gruesome murmurs greeted this proposition.

"We'll smother to death if we're kept long in this tight, stifling place," gritted Joe.

"Just how long will the air last and keep us alive?" demanded Jackets.

"An hour, anyway," replied Frank, after thought. "Two hours, perhaps."

"And then?"

"If we're prisoners here at the end of two hours we'll certainly be in a dying condition by that time!"

Frank's voice trembled uneasily as he spoke, though as leader of the Up and At 'Em Boys in everything, he felt the necessity of keeping up his own courage and theirs.

"All begin to hammer on the door together," proposed Foster.

"No!" rang Manley's voice, sharply.

"But the racket——"

"Would not be heard if the hammering of one were not. Fellows, the more muscular exertion, the deeper your breaths will be. The more we breathe, the sooner we use up the little air there is in this living tomb. Joe, you take care of the racket. The rest of you stand quite still."

Bang! bang! went Prescott's fists on the steel barrier.

"It won't do much good," I'm afraid," groaned Humphrey. "Just as the door closed I heard the meanest kind of a chuckle. Whoever tilted the door to on us did it on purpose, and with the intention of shutting us up in here."

"Even to the point of committing murder?" gasped Hal.

"I'm afraid so," replied Manley, grimly,

"This is awful!" shuddered Jackets.

"Don't lose grit, little one!" urged Manley, anxiously.

"Oh, if we've got to die," replied Winston, quietly, "I'll take my dose as gamely as any of you."

"That's right," cheered Frank. "You're not losing hope, Jackets, I see."

"Hope? No," Jackets retorted. "That's all there is left us now."

But though Joe went on hammering steadily, there came no answer nor sign of rescue.

His fists aching, finally Joe substituted his feet, raining kicks against the great solid steel barrier.

"I wonder if this sounds as loud as a fly walking on the other side?" Joe groaned.

"It's our only hope, anyway," Manley responded, quietly.

"If we can't make some one hear who doesn't want us to die, then we've met our end in here."

How much time went by in there none could guess.

But they realized at last that Joe had pounded and kicked until he felt sore and exhausted.

Humphrey took his place.

In the tight, stuffy interior of that safe the din that was made against the steel door sounded almost deafening.

Did it sound at all on the other side of that foot thickness of ponderous steel?

They grew sick with wondering, sick with waiting—sick unto death of the dread of the fate that now seemed certain.

Finally, Manley could bear the suspense no longer. Determined to know how much time had passed, he struck a match, then fumbled for his watch.

Flare! sputter! The match went out before he could bring the watch to sight.

Frank felt a thrill of the greatest terror he had ever known.

If the air had already become so poisonous that a match would not burn there, then the end was near.

"I'm too sore to pound more," groaned Humphrey.

"I'll take your place," Hal proposed.

But this situation sent another cold chill of dread over Manley.

He knew instantly why it was that Humphrey's effort had lasted such a short time.

When the muscles are exercised in a place where there is not an ample supply of fresh air they quickly become sore and aching.

It is really killing the muscles, and with them the body, to exercise in a room in which no fresh air can enter.

"It's about over with us," Manley groaned to himself.

But he would not speak his thought to his comrades.

They must guess how near the end was, but he would not tell them.

Hal gave out; Foster took his place.

Manley, conscious that what little hope there was would depend upon him, did not propose to take his place hammering at the steel door until the last. He wanted to keep his head clear for any other need that might come up.

Thud! It was Jackets who had fallen weakly to the floor.

The little fellow was conscious, but too weak to stand any longer.

"I'm game!" muttered the little fellow, as Frank picked him up, propping him against the steel wall.

"I'm done!" Hal soon admitted.

Then Frank, as the last one, took his place before the door.

He did not attempt to hammer with his fists, but kicked with all the vigor that there was in him.

Thud! Another fall. It was Foster this time!

But Joe and Humphrey got Dick to his feet, bracing him as best they could.

The carbonic acid gas that their lungs were giving off in this stifling place is heavier than air. Consequently, carbonic acid gas, in an utterly closed room, settles near the floor first. To keep life in those who were giving way it was vital to keep them erect, with their heads as far as possible from the floor.

There was a constant ringing noise in Manley's ears now, as he kicked desperately against the steel.

He knew that the end was near, yet he was determined to keep up the effort as long as he could barely swing his foot for a kick.

Did he really hear a sound on the other side of the door? Or was it a trick of the imagination.

For a few moments Manley ceased his kicking, listening as intently as he could, with his head reeling and his senses swaying.

"Yes. It sounded like voices!

In an access of despair, Frank kicked harder and harder. He was trying to put in his most telling kicks now.

"Is there any one on the other side of that door?"

The voice sounded faint and far away. Manley tried to shout an answer, but his voice came hoarsely, hardly above a whisper.

He tried to redouble the fury of his kicks.

Then there was a scratching sound—a click!

Slowly the great door swung open, letting in a dazzling flood of light—but, best of all, a great sweep of pure, breathable air!

"Good heavens!" sounded the startled voice of Mr. Henderson.

There were two men standing just beyond the open steel door, but Frank did not even take the trouble to look at them.

Two great, almost choking gulps of fresh air he took, then turned to help Joe carry out Jackets, while Hal and Humphrey helped Dick Foster out of that living tomb.

All six of the young athletes collapsed at the nearest sofas and chairs.

"Open the windows!" Frank gasped.

At first he was barely conscious that this was being done.

Then, as the cold, sweet air began to revive him, he looked up into the anxious face of Mr. Henderson and into the wondering eyes of another and younger man.

"How did it happen?" demanded this younger man, quickly now.

"Wait!" Frank begged.

As soon as our hero felt that he had the strength to rise and walk, he went over to Jackets and Foster, helping them to the open window. Mr. Henderson, who looked tremulously on, without speaking, flew to aid the young athletes.

Then the younger man took his cue, and also helped to get the young men to the two open windows.

The weakness and exhaustion soon passed away.

But had their imprisonment in that fearful place lasted ten minutes more all of the young athletes might have been past help.

"I guess we're getting to be all right now," smiled Manley, as his companions followed his own example of walking about the library.

Chilled by the sweep of cold air, Mr. Henderson had retreated to a position before the open grate fire.

"How ever did that door close on you all?" spoke the younger man.

"At first I almost believed that some one had closed the door on us," Manley answered, steadily.

"Good heavens!" gasped the younger man. "Do you mean that some one did it deliberately?"

"That was my first thought," Frank returned.

"But who could have done it? And why?"

"Yes. Why?" cried Mr. Henderson, eagerly.

"Probably that will never be known, so we may as well forget it," Frank smiled. "Are you," turning to the younger man, "of the police?"

"I? The police? Oh, no!" the younger man returned, readily. "I am Mr. Henderson's nephew. Fortunately, I arrived from New York just in time to be of possible service to my uncle. It is a terrible loss that he has suffered, but I am inclined to feel that his fright is even more serious."

The nephew was a pleasantly spoken, well-bred young man of possibly twenty-eight.

His face was smooth, save for a slight mustache. His eyes were clear and frank, their blue depths glowed with a friendly light as he looked Manley over.

"My nephew arrived just after I left you," the old man went on, hurriedly. "His train had just come in and he came up here in the depot carriage. He has, indeed, come at a time when he can be useful."

"Not knowing of your predicament in the safe," went on the nephew, "we had been searching industriously for clews to the thieves."

"And found none?" suggested Manley.

"I am glad to say that we did not," replied the nephew, more seriously. "Since talking it over more fully with my uncle I have come to agree with him that it is not desirable to pursue the thieves."

"And why not?" Manley cried, in astonishment.

"Tell him, uncle, if you see fit," suggested the nephew, turning to the old man.

"While here at work," replied Mr. Henderson, tremulously, "the thieves warned me that any effort to get on their track would result in disaster to me and mine."

"Of course they did," Frank broke in, warmly. "It is an old trick, and one not worthy of notice."

"I do not quite agree with you," replied the younger man. "These were the automobile thieves. They are a new gang, of the most expert and desperate men in the country. I already know of one death in New York that I believe this gang responsible for. The man who was killed is believed to have been robbed by this same gang. They gave him the same warning that they gave my uncle. Nevertheless, the man urged the police and private detectives on. As a result, the man was found dead—murdered—within two days. And I have heard hints that other murders could be traced to this gang. But even the police are afraid to get in the gang's way a second time."

"Then you have advised your uncle to give up pursuit—to give up effort to recover what he has lost?" Manley demanded.

"My uncle seems to think it best to remain silent," the young man replied, with the air of one who is making a correction.

"Yes! yes!" cried Mr. Henderson. "I do not care to be killed, nor do I want to run the risk of having Paul killed."

"He is always fearful for me, poor uncle!" smiled the nephew. "For myself I do not care, even though the automobile gang tried to kill me out of revenge upon my uncle——"

"Do not say that, Paul!" cried the old man. "What would I have to live for if my only near relative—my only boy—were taken from me?"

"It is for you, uncle, that I am most concerned," replied Paul Henderson. "For I am certain that the members of the gang would find some way of speedily carrying out their threat against you."

"I shall not defy that fearful crowd!" quavered the old man.

"You will suffer your loss in silence, sir?" Frank asked.

"Yes, yes. Far better that."

"It is best—certainly best—not to defy the gang," sighed Paul.

"Yet the loss was great, was it not?" Manley hinted.

For the first time the nephew frowned, as if he were hinting that Manley was asking too direct questions.

But the old man broke in, tremulously:

"The loss was considerable, but I shall have enough left. Money, bonds and jewels were taken to the value of about a hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars."

"And you will suffer that loss?" Frank cried, incredulously.

"Sooner than face the excitement and the great risk," nodded the nephew. "My uncle is not a young man, and his decision is the wisest."

"Did you telephone the police?" Frank inquired.

"No," Mr. Henderson replied. "I decided that it would be best to accept the warning that I received."

"So, if you do not mind," hinted the younger man, courteously but decisively, "we will say good night. My uncle should get quiet and retire. I shall be here to guard him."

"By all means," Frank nodded.

Truth to tell, our hero was eager to get out of the house.

Paul Henderson escorted them to the outer door.

"How did it happen that you young men came here so promptly?" he inquired.

"We had been out coasting, and were going by," Frank explained. "We were just in time to see the automobile gang entering their auto. Something in their actions made us think that all was not well. We hurried up here to make sure, and found—what we found."

"I hope for the sake of what has happened you will all keep silent about what has happened," suggested the nephew, anxiously. "If news of this gets out, from what I have heard of that fearful crew, the automobile gang, I really believe that my uncle and myself would be in a good deal of danger. So, if all you young men keep so quiet that no word of this affair leaks out, in a week you may

send one of your number to me to receive a very substantial reward for your silence. May I consider that you promise?"

"You do not need to offer us bribes," Frank replied, rather stiffly.

"Then——"

"Good night."

Starting slightly, as if he felt the rebuff, Paul Henderson held back the door for them to pass out.

Down the driveway strode the young athletes.

But once out in the road Frank Manley turned and shook his fist in the direction of the house.

"You infernal thief—and would-be murderer!" he cried, hotly.

"Meaning—who?" Joe blandly queried.

"Paul Henderson!" came, vehemently, from Manley.

CHAPTER V.

TRAPPING THE AUTOMOBILE GANG.

"Do you mean to say that Paul Henderson is one of the gang?" quivered amazed Joe.

"I mean to say that he engineered the whole affair," Manley retorted. "More than that, I believe he was in the auto at the time when we first ran afoul of it."

There was a chorus of amazed murmurs.

"I should say at once that you are wholly wrong," broke in Hal, "were it not for the fact that you are generally right."

"But what makes you suspect the nephew?" Joe insisted.

"Who else was there to lock us in that vault?" Frank demanded.

"And Mr. Henderson told me," suggested Hal, quickly, "how near he had come to not returning to the library. His nephew wanted him to go at once to his bedroom. And Mr. Henderson told me, too, that even when he entered the library, and thought he heard sounds from the vault, Paul Henderson scouted the idea."

"There you are!" cried Frank, in triumph.

"I'm flabbergasted," Joe admitted. "And the nephew seemed like a mighty decent young fellow, too."

"We want to find out if that auto broke down anywhere near here," suggested Frank. "Get the double-runner, and we'll follow along the road for a while."

Hardly an eighth of a mile further on they came across the auto, lying disabled at the side of the road.

There was no one near it. Plainly the Bradford police did not yet know of the presence of this obstacle to travel.

"They've taken off the automatic device that kept changing the tag number," Dick Foster swiftly reported.

"Then there's no way of finding out who owned the machine," flashed Lon Humphrey.

"There isn't?" smiled Manley. "What's the matter with taking the maker's number and other distinguishing marks?"

The maker's number on the machine proved to be 2984. This Manley jotted down, then glanced with grim satisfaction at the exploded tire.

"We must have upset their plans a bit," he laughed, grimly. "But now for the Bradford police. Fortunately, Chief Gerrity is a young and up-to-date man. He'll know what to do with what we can tell him."

"Then you're going to carry this to the police?" Hal asked.

"Most certainly—yes."

"But the threats of the automobile gang?"

"Threats by which Paul Henderson hoped to scare his uncle into silence."

"And you're going to brave Mr. Paul?"

"We're going to help Chief Gerrity to do it," Frank replied.

"Same thing!"

It was not far into Bradford. Though still suffering somewhat from the confinement in the vault, the youngsters tramped briskly.

"Hal, Joe and I will go to the station-house," Frank decided. "The rest of you take the double-runner down to the depot. We'll pick you up there. It's fortunate that we brought our skates. We can make quick time home by going down the river."

Chief Gerrity was just coming out of the little station-house to go home for the night when the three leaders of the Up and At 'Em Boys ran up the steps.

"Why, his looks like business," hailed Bradford's chief of police, as he halted.

"Dog lost!" grinned Frank. "It was a pet, and the owner misses it greatly. Can we see you about it?"

Chief Gerrity led the way back to his office, feeling very well assured that something important lay behind Manley's flippant remark.

For this was not the first time that these same youngsters had called upon the chief upon matters of great importance.

But, even though he expected something out of the usual, Gerrity's eyes opened to their widest as Manley ran quickly on through the startling story.

"Why, this is the strangest thing we have ever had happen here," cried the chief.

"It'll be stranger by the time that you've ferreted out the whole affair," Frank retorted.

"But if the nephew is really guilty, how are we going to prove it?"

"I'll map that out to you, as far as it has occurred to me," Manley answered.

"And how shall we find out who his accomplices were?"

"Well, you have the maker's number of the auto to start on?"

"True, and that ought to help us a good deal. But, my boy, this case may lead us hundreds of miles from here."

"If it does," smiled Frank, "it strikes me that you will be able to get the co-operation of the police in other places."

"Oh, of course I can," replied the chief, easily. "But, first of all, I ought to run up to Henderson's and see the old man and have a look at the vault."

"If you do," Frank retorted, "that will certainly be about all you will ever find out in the matter. You will put the

rascals on their guard. Now, I believe, chief, that the only way to catch the scoundrels napping will be to let them think that you're napping yourself. Why, chief, you have a chance to find out a lot before you pass the gate at Henderson's."

"Let me hear your idea, then."

"Well, first of all, keep away from Mr. Henderson's. And say no word to any one of what you have heard."

"Granted. But what else?"

"Send an anonymous letter to Paul Henderson, stating that the writer has learned how he took a ride in an auto with a changing license tag. Tell him that the writer is a poor man who wants only a little money to help him West. Ask him to meet the writer and bring the small sum of two hundred dollars."

"Well?"

"If Paul Henderson takes the scare, and tries to meet the unsigned writer of that note, you'll be pretty sure of his share in the enterprise, won't you?"

"Naturally."

"You can be on hand, in hiding, to see whether he does keep the appointment."

"By Jove! I'll have that letter drafted and mailed before I go home," uttered Gerrity.

"Then find out who owns the auto; find out from the maker who the buyer was, and trace it along to subsequent owners, if there were any."

"I see."

"And, of course, have an effective but very, very quiet watch put on the movements of young Mr. Henderson."

"Why, the thing begins to look easy!" exclaimed Chief Gerrity.

"It may suddenly look as easy as a primer lesson by the time that you've got the word from the automobile maker," Frank retorted.

"By going without some of my sleep to-night I can make a swift start in this matter," beamed the chief.

"And keep me posted over the telephone, won't you, Mr. Gerrity?"

"I surely will!"

"When you know more about the affair I may be able to help you further."

"It would be a wonder if you didn't!" cried the police official as he followed the boys to the door.

Once he had seen them off, Chief Gerrity returned to his desk in a jubilant frame of mind.

He was a young official, full of zeal, and with an itching desire to distinguish himself.

Here, certainly, was the chance, and the chief buckled down to work.

The other youngsters were found waiting at the depot.

Almost in silence they proceeded to the river, and soon were skating toward Woodstock.

There they separated, each going to his home.

It was after eleven now, and Mrs. Manley, with a book in her lap, was awaiting the home-coming of her son.

"There's some one wants you on the telephone, Frank," was his mother's greeting.

His first thought was of his sweetheart, Kitty Dunstan.

But Mrs. Manley's next words undeceived him.

"Chief Gerrity, over at Bradford, wants you to call him up."

Frank was at the instrument in a hurry.

Chief Gerrity's first words contained plenty of news.

"Manley, that gang must be as dangerous as it claims to be. Fifteen minutes ago a bomb was exploded at the front of the station-house. The front of the building is just about a wreck. Two prisoners in the front of the basement were nearly killed, and have been removed to the hospital!"

Frank tingled with excitement.

"Not a clew."

"Well, at least, you have an idea in what quarter to look."

"Thank goodness I have. But it may keep me busy protecting the station-house from destruction."

"We must have been watched on our way to the station-house."

"Beyond a doubt," came the prompt Bradford opinion. "And that's what I want to caution you about, Manley. Look out for yourself, and your own home!"

"It looks as if I might need to. And I certainly will. Chief, I thank you a thousand times."

"Keep a close watch out, Manley!"

"I will."

"Good-by!"

Frank rang off, his mind full of the excitement of the night.

"Frank, my son, is anything wrong?" asked Mrs. Manley, quietly.

"Yes, mother—over in Bradford!"

Mrs. Manley asked no more questions. But she remained up, chatting with her son until the latter, after putting his bulldog on guard in the front hallway, climbed the stairs to his room.

There was no alarm in the night. Frank got, on the whole, a good night's rest.

He was up early in the morning, ran over to the club's gym for exercise and a swim, and then went to the post-office before going home for breakfast.

In the mail there was one letter postmarked "Bradford."

Quickly our hero tore the envelope open.

It contained a picture of an automobile, clipped, evidently, from the advertising pages of a magazine.

But, on the margin of the paper was printed, in ink, the message:

"You are a marked young man!"

That was all. But Frank understood.

"From the automobile gang! A threat—or a warning?" he mused.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVIL'S WORK ON THE COASTING SLIDE.

"How the mischief did they get our names so quickly?"

It was at least the twelfth time that day that Hal had asked the question in one form or another.

For he and Joe had received similar warnings in the morning's mail.

The other three youngsters in the adventure of the night before had been ignored so far as warning by mail was concerned.

"They know who we are—that's all I can tell you," Frank replied.

"Is it a bluff threat?"

"I hope so."

"You think not?" persisted Hal.

"Why, candidly, after what that gang did at the Bradford police station last night, it looks as if the automobile gang was equal to any form of desperate crime."

"Well, at least, we're safe while we're out here with all this crowd," Hal went on, cheerfully, as he surveyed the busy scene.

Thy were in the great fields back of Bradford.

Two great hills faced each other. There were other smaller hills in the great stretch of open.

The spot was the favorite coasting place of Bradford.

Here, away from the streets, the boys of Bradford were wont to make their coasting slides.

Bradford boys were out by scores that afternoon.

Tod Owen, captain of the Bradford Club, was out with his double-runner. With him were his lieutenant, Gus Hepnak; and Shirley, Evans, Moore and Distleigh.

Frank's party, which had hastened up from Woodstock on the river ice at the close of afternoon school, was the same that he had had out with him the night before.

Tod Owen and his crew were waiting for them now at the top of the hill.

"Which club has the fastest double-runner?" called out a Bradford man who had paused to watch the sport.

"That's what we're trying to find out," Tod replied. "How is it, Frank? Can you beat me, or have I the best of you?"

"It all seems to depend," laughed Manley. "The fellow who gets right in the middle of the track has won every time so far. I've beaten Tod badly, and he has wiped us off the map several times. It all depends on which gets first in the middle track and keeps to it. The fellow who tries to go by on the outside of the track simply can't do it."

"That's about the size of it," nodded Tod. "So, really, we can't decide which side is fastest."

"Race against time, then—the best three out of five," hinted the man who had asked the question.

"That wouldn't be bad," Manley acknowledged. "But it seems to me that there is a more exciting way yet."

"If it's exciting," cried Tod, "then please let me in. I want to know all about it."

"Well, see here," proposed Frank. "Suppose that you start from a given point on the hill opposite. We'll start from a given point on this hill. We'll pass each other down there on the level. Now, so soon as you think best, jump off your double-runner and hurry up to the given point on this hill. We'll hurry up to the given point on the other hill. And then the race will be to see who can get down and reach a given point on the level first. That will call for judgment, hustling and some good running up the hills."

"That would be novel," Tod admitted.

"Then consider yourselves challenged," laughed Frank. "It's about the only way to settle which crew can handle its double-runner most quickly.

"Challenge accepted," Tod declared, promptly.

The news of the contest spread rapidly.

Boys and men gathered to hear the details, and to be ready to watch the start.

"Here's the starting point on this hill," cried Frank, thrusting a stick upright in a heap of snow. "The front sled must be flush with this stick. Coast down, Tod, and set up a stick at the given point on the level. Then climb the other hill and put up a stick at the point of starting there. I'll signal whether we agree to your marks."

"All aboard!" sang out Owen.

"We'll turn to the right of each other when we meet down on the level!" called Frank.

"To the right. O. K.!" Tod called back. "Remember—to the right, for we'll be going at express train speed when we pass. To the right!"

"To the right," Manley confirmed, as the Bradford double-runner started.

Two or three single sleds followed in the wake of the Bradford double-runner. On one of these sleds was a young man who might have been twenty-five years of age.

Down on the level stretch below Tod halted long enough to hold up a stick where he thought it ought to be set up.

Frank waved his arms in assent.

"That's to be the finishing stake, after we've coasted both hills," our hero explained to some of the bystanders.

Quickly Tod and his crew climbed the opposite hill.

Here, too, they held up a stick, and Manley signalled agreement.

"It's a new form of coasting race, and, I believe, a good one," Frank declared to Hal.

"There'll be some sport in it" was Spofford's answer.

"I hope Tod won't try to shave too close. We'll be going at terrific speed down there on the level. Whew! What a collision would mean!"

The young man who had coasted down behind the Bradford double-runner now came toiling up the hill.

He came straight up to Manley.

"Owen sent a message by me," began the young man.

"Yes?" Frank inquired.

"He told me he'd rather you both made the turn to the left, instead, as he thinks he can do better that way."

"It's all the same to me, left or right," Frank replied. "But you're sure Owen said he'd turn to the left instead of the right?"

"Of course I'm sure, "retorted the volunteer messenger. "That's just what he said—turn to the left. He can make a safer turn to the left."

"One way is as good as the other for us," pronounced Hal.

"To the left!" Manley repeated, again.

He wanted to fix the change in the steering directions firmly in his mind.

Tod and his crew were taking their seats on the Bradford runner, all except the last two men, who were to give the push for the start.

"In your places!" Frank called, sharply.

He himself took his place at the steering wheel.

Hal was just behind him. Then Jackets, then Foster. To Joe and Humphrey was left the task of pushing off at the start.

"To the left!" Frank repeated again, as he rested both hands on the steering wheel.

A little way down the slope stood the man who was to act as starter.

He was to throw both arms quickly up as the signal, at which both racing crews were at liberty to start.

Other coasters had stopped their sport. They had gathered, now, to watch the race.

"All ready!" bawled the starter.

Then, framing his hands over his mouth, the starter yelled the same warning across to the top of the hill opposite.

"You fellows at the back give us a tremendous push," called Frank. "We want to go like a young whirlwind down the hill!"

The Biff Twins, tense and ready, kept their gaze on the starter.

That volunteer official glanced at both crews, then suddenly threw up his hands.

"Like blazes, now!" panted Joe to his twin.

The double-runner shot forward like a projectile, giving the Biff Twins barely time to fall aboard.

Now they were off, on by far the swiftest run of the afternoon.

Manley's gaze was fixed on the course ahead.

He was keeping straight in the middle, on the best slipping part of the well-worn track.

"To the left!" he muttered, again, as he took an instant's glimpse of the Bradford runner whizzing down the opposite hill to meet him.

Tod, too, was steering in the middle, best part of the track.

When they neared each other on the level each captain would have to steer from the middle track a little in order that the passing might be safely made.

Yet each clung to the middle track as long as it was safe, for each felt that the race, by whomever won, would be by a lead of not more than a few seconds.

They were nearing now, both double-runners gaining in speed as they whizzed down the steep slopes.

From the hilltops came the cheers of the spectators of this novel race.

And now both racing runners were on the level stretch between the bases of the hills.

Until almost perilously near, each young steersman held straight to the middle of the slide.

It looked risky, but it wasn't.

Each young skipper had his swift land craft under easy and absolute control.

Each had a clear head and a steady nerve.

When it came time to make the swerve for the passing each could do it quickly and safely.

As they neared, Tod turned swiftly, neatly to his own right.

At the same instant, Manley turned to his own left.

This, instead of allowing them to pass, would bring the two racers into head-on collision.

But Frank could not believe that Owen had made a mistake.

There was no time, anyway, for either young steersman to alter his course in the least.

The rest happened in a second.

Going at top racing speed the two double-runners met fully and fairly.

The disaster was smashing, fearful, complete!

Cries of agony greeted Death as it hovered near.

The flower of the two athletic clubs had crashed in that catastrophe.

"No excuse!" moaned Manley, as, with a fearful jolt, he felt himself being hurled through space after the crash.

The air was filled with shrieks—then, an instant later with the groans of the injured.

Some of the coasters were lying still and white, seemingly dead.

"Run for the doctors!" rose the shout on the hill.

Frank sat slowly up in the snow, wondering how badly he was hurt.

"What made you steer to the left?" groaned Tod, crawling toward him.

"Why, you sent me word to," Frank answered, faintly.

"Sent you nothing!" Tod retorted, sharply. "We agreed to turn to the right. That was the last word."

"But you sent me a different message!" Frank protested.

"No, I didn't. Not a word!"

Frank Manley felt suddenly death-like as the awful, enormous suspicion of the truth rushed to his brain.

CHAPTER VII.

"AN EYE FOR AN EYE!"

"Then you sent me no message at all?" came through Frank's bloodless lips.

"About turning to the left, instead of the right."

"Never a word!"

"Oh!"

That was the only word that came, this time, from between Manley's teeth, but it was full of meaning.

"Are you much hurt?" he asked of Tod.

"An ankle smashed, I think. That's all."

As Frank put the questions he had succeeded in getting to his feet, though with an effort.

Not until he turned, now, for a complete view of the wreck, did he realize how much harm had been done.

Hal lay still and white, as if dead.

Jackets's eyes were open, but he was gasping, and his face was paler than Manley had ever seen it.

Humphrey, by some miracle, had escaped anything worse than a moment's dazing.

He was now on his knees, bending over Dick Foster, who lay as still as if dead.

Joe, with a blood-soaked handkerchief, was trying to stop the flow of red fluid from a long tear in his scalp.

Nor was the Bradford outlook even as cheering.

Three of Tod's crew lay still and lifeless.

Distleigh, though able to sit up, was holding both hands in the region of his belt.

Shirley's face was distorted by the pain in his right shoulder. He sat near the wreck of the double-runners, looking the picture of misery.

"That was mighty careless work on some one's part!" shouted the first man to reach the scene from the hilltop.

"It was due to a mistake," said Manley, simply.

"Whose?"

"Mine," said Manley, simply.

For an instant Tod almost forgot his own suffering in his astonishment.

"What made you say that, Frank?" he demanded.

"It's the truth."

"That your mistake caused the wreck?"

"Yes."

"But I don't understand——"

"I made one of the biggest mistakes in my life in taking such a message from a stranger of whom I knew nothing."

"And I can't understand," confessed the puzzled Tod, "why he should have taken the trouble to carry such a lie."

But Manley hardly heard this. He had gone over to where the uninjured Humphrey was still bending over Foster.

"Humph, you saw the fellow who brought me that lying word?"

"Was it a lie?"

"Yes; a wicked, deliberate lie. You saw him?"

"Of course."

"You'd know him again?"

"Sure!"

"You're not hurt, are you?"

"Not enough to know it."

"Then go and find that fellow—if you have to follow him into another State!"

Lon Humphrey turned and bounded away.

But, as he ran, he called back over his shoulder:

"If I find him——?"

"Pound him until he looks worse than any one here!"

The order fairly shot from Frank Manley's lips.

Pallid with the horror of the scene, quivering with rage over the dastardly work that had caused the smash-up, the young athlete meant every word of the order.

And he knew that he could rely to the full on Lon Humphrey to execute the command.

There were a score of people on hand, now, and more arriving.

"We'll have doctors here soon," announced one man.

But Frank did not wait for medical aid. He directed the bystanders in caring for the hurt.

Of those who were unconscious, Manley felt the pulses.

He gave a great sigh of relief when he realized that no one had been killed.

Within three minutes Hal opened his eyes. It took longer than that to bring Dick Foster to.

Jackets was soon able to sit up, and then, a little later, was able to walk about slowly.

Winston had suffered from a jarring that had taken all the breath out of him for a while.

Gus Hepnak was so badly hurt that, though alive, he had not recovered his senses by the time that the doctors decided to send him away in one of the carriages that had been hurried to the scene.

Humphrey had not come back.

In fact, he had disappeared from the field.

From this Manley guessed that the Biff Twin had discovered some clew to the course taken by the fellow who had brought the false message.

"Humph won't let up. He'll follow to the ends of the earth," Manley grated, with satisfaction.

Now, Tod, having been fixed up as well as was possible, had resisted the advice of the doctors to go home in a carriage.

He sat on a sled that had been offered for the purpose, and waited until our hero could talk with him.

"I'm terribly puzzled about that lying message that was supposed to come from me," he said, slowly.

"I'm not," Manley retorted, crisply.

"Then I wish you'd make it plain to me, too."

"Hal, Joe and I had been warned to look out for trouble."

"Oh! Another affair?"

"Yes."

"And that was the way your enemies tried to get square with you?"

"Not a doubt about it."

"And to hurt three fellows they took a chance on killing a dozen?"

"From what I've heard, that's nothing unusual with the automobile gang."

"I beg your pardon. The—what?" asked Tod.

"It's something you don't know about," Frank replied, quickly.

"Oh! I didn't mean to be prying."

"I know you didn't, Tod. Well, you'll know about it all before long. So will every one else, I hope."

But so many questions were asked by the spectators that the whole story of the false message soon came out.

"Why, I saw that fellow, and heard him deliver the message," remarked one man.

Then he turned, hastening away.

"Where are you going?" hailed some one.

"Going to see if I can find the scoundrel!"

"And if you do?"

"I'll hammer him first, and then turn him over to the police."

In a twinkling three or four more men hurried away.

Then a general demand came for a description of the unknown scoundrel.

There were now at least a score of people besides Lon Humphrey looking eagerly for the young man who had caused the disaster.

Joe, growling a good deal, but never once wincing under the pain, had had a few stitches taken in his scalp, and now declared that he was in as good trim as ever.

"But where are you hurt, Frank?" he demanded.

"I haven't had time to think about it yet," Frank laughed.

But now he gave himself enough thought to discover that his abdominal muscles had been severely wrenched, and that his right ankle was slightly, not badly, sprained.

"You've no internal injuries, Manley," reported one of the doctors, after looking the young athlete over.

"Yes, I have," Frank retorted.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Well, at least, there's an internal disturbance," Frank answered, grimly. "I'm boiling inside."

"And I don't blame you. Neither can I help you."

Hal, Jackets and Foster had been persuaded to get into a cab and ride to the Bradford hospital, there to rest a while before being taken home.

All of the Bradford contingent needed to be taken back into their home town.

Joe, do you feel good for anything now?" Frank asked.

"Good for most anything!"

"Good! Then we'll see if we can find Humphrey."

"I hope—oh, I hope!—that Humph has found the fellow he went after!"

"If he has," grimaced Frank, "there won't be anything left for us to do."

"Oh, Humph would leave me a little piece to pound," grinned Joe. "He never was a hog."

"Can I give you a lift to Bradford?" called Tod, from the inside of a cab.

The Bradford captain would not be able to walk much for two or three days to come.

Frank and Joe accepted the offer, for some one had just told them that Humphrey had last been seen running toward Bradford.

"I can't understand how that liar thought his plan out so quick," Tod uttered, in a puzzled tone.

"I can," came grimly from Manley. "It was he who first hinted to me the beauties of that style of race."

"It was?" Tod cried, opening his eyes very wide now.

"Yes; that fellow pointed out the lay of the course between the two hills and said such a race would be worth seeing."

"Then he came to the field with that dirty scheme in mind," growled Joe. "The trick had been well thought out in advance."

"And I fell an easy enough victim," Manley uttered, disgustedly.

"I feel like swearing in seven-syllabled words," raged Joe.

"It reminds me more of a passage from the Bible," Frank rejoined.

"It does?"

"Yes; the part that speaks of 'an eye for an eye—a tooth for a tooth!'"

"My sentiments to a dot, at the present moment!" gritted Joe. "We will find that liar and gouge out all the eyes and teeth he's got!"

"He must be punished, to be sure," Frank admitted, thoughtfully.

"Must be punished?" mocked Joe, with fine scorn. "What are you talking about."

"But the liar is not the real one we're after."

"Oh!" rejoined Joe, light breaking in on him. Then you mean——"

"Paul Henderson is the man we want most of all!"

"Paul Henderson?" cried Tod. "Why, I know him."

"You don't know much good of him, then," muttered Prescott.

"On the contrary, I always thought him a pretty good sort of fellow."

"We know differently," said Manley, quietly. "It happens that he's the one responsible for this afternoon's crash."

"Paul Henderson?" cried Tod, again.

He looked utterly amazed.

"He's such a nice fellow," grumbled Joe, "that we're only sorry he hasn't a dozen eyes and four sets of teeth. We'd take delight in extracting them all for him!"

Tod looked too puzzled to say more.

Paul Henderson had the knack of making friends.

Few people would ever think of associating a man of his type with crime.

All this time the cab had been rolling along into Bradford.

On their way the boys had passed several of the volunteers who had started in pursuit of the liar who had caused the wreck.

"Tod, do you mind letting the driver go through the principal streets?" Frank asked. "I want to see if we can run across Humphrey and join forces with him."

But, though they drove through street after street, they caught neither sight nor tidings of Humphrey until they turned into the street that led down to the depot.

But now they caught sight of that strenuous young fellow.

He passed them, headed for the depot, and running as fast as he could go.

"Humph!" called Manley, poking his head out of the cab.

But Humphrey did not slacken his swift stride.

"Can't stop!" he called. "Man's at the depot. There's the train, now! Come on!"

The last words were barely audible, Lon Humphrey was so far down the street.

"Drive fast—the depot!" shouted Manley to the driver.

"Eh?" came, stupidly, from the man on the box.

With a snort of impatience, Manley stepped quickly from the cab.

Joe bounded after him. Tod could not very well follow.

"Come on! I'll help you a bit!" Joe proposed, slipping his arm under Manley's.

The train was passing the crossing at this instant.

Frank and Joe turned the corner near the depot in time to see Lon Humphrey impatiently staring up and down the depot platform.

Then, suddenly, Humphrey uttered a cry, as one of the doors of the station building opened.

The liar rushed for the train.

Behind him appeared Paul Henderson.

Humphrey saw them both and darted toward them.

But the liar gained the car steps just ahead of Humphrey.

As the latter made a grab for the liar, Henderson caught at the arm of Humphrey.

Manley and Joe hurried forward, but the distance was too great for them to cover in time.

The train had begun to move.

Like a young lion, Humphrey fought to free himself of Henderson's grasp.

After a moment or two he succeeded.

But the train had rolled past. It was impossible, now, to overtake it.

His face blazing, Humphrey turned on the man who held to him so tightly.

Biff! Lon proved his title to his nickname, for the blow was a fearful one.

It stretched Paul Henderson on the station platform.

Just as Henderson got slowly to his feet, Frank and Joe reached the spot.

"You young vagabond!" sputtered Henderson. "I'll have you arrested for that blow."

"Do!" Frank advised, coolly. "Placing under arrest is a nice game. We know how to play it, too."

Henderson's face darkened, then whitened.

"Have you any idea what you're talking about?" he quivered.

"I merely hinted," Frank rejoined, quietly, "that you're quite as liable to arrest as anyone else. Shall we all walk to the police-station together?"

Paul Henderson stared angrily into the young athlete's blazing eyes, then lowered his own gaze.

"I don't want to be mixed up with young brawlers," he uttered, sulkily.

"Then, if you don't want to go to the police-station," suggested Frank, "simply walk straight through the town and out on the road to your uncle's."

"And if I don't choose?"

"Then we'll take the risk of leading you to the police-station. Don't try any further nonsense, Henderson. You know as well what I mean as I do myself. Either walk through the town and out along the road to your uncle's, or you'll wind up in a police-station cell. There's no other choice. If you intend to show your good sense, walk—and keep on walking just as I have advised."

For a moment it looked as if young Henderson would balk. Then, with heaving chest and short breath, he walked away.

Frank and Joe followed, Humphrey bringing up the rear with a curious smile on his face.

"Joe," whispered Frank, "you leave us and sneak around by another street to the police-station. Ask them to telephone down the line to see if that liar can be caught at another station and arrested. Make the charge against him that he caused the wreck this afternoon. As soon as you have given the message to the police, overtake us. You ought to be in time to see what is going to happen."

There was a queer look in Manley's eyes, as he replied: "An eye for an eye!"

CHAPTER VIII.

POUNDING A BAD MAN TO MAKE HIM GOOD.

Paul Henderson walked through the streets of the town with an assumption of bravado.

He could not doubt, for a moment, that Manley's tone and manner hinted at trouble to come.

As he turned to look at the boys, he observed that Joe had vanished.

There was a brief look of surprise in Henderson's eyes, but, of course, he could not ask any questions.

"If he takes to his legs, I can't run after him very fast," Frank whispered to Humphrey.

"I can!" retorted that youngster. "I was going some when you saw me, wasn't I?"

"You sure were."

"I had just heard that Henderson and the fellow had been seen going toward the depot."

Not a word of this, of course, reached the man whom they were following.

Henderson did not attempt to run.

Nor, for that matter, did he walk very briskly. He moved like one who was thinking hard and who walked only by instinct.

In time Henderson turned out upon the country road that led past his uncle's home.

Just here it was that Joe caught up with his two friends.

The three now walked abreast, some forty or fifty feet behind young Henderson.

As for that latter worthy, he was now quickening his pace quite a little.

But the only notice that the youngsters took of this was to hasten their own gait in the same proportion.

Henderson did not look back at all now. He walked as if quite unconscious of pursuit.

Frank waited until they had gone at least half a mile out on the road.

Here, houses were few and well apart, and most of them closed for the winter.

"Henderson!" our hero called, sharply.

Quick as a flash, Paul Henderson wheeled about.

As he did so, he drew a revolver from his overcoat pocket.

The sight of the weapon brought the youngsters up short for an instant.

"Well?" sneered the young man. "What is this? A hold-up?"

"We want a few words with you," Frank retorted, coolly. "Keep your distance, then!"

But, while Manley stood still, Joe obliqued out at his right, and Humphrey to the left.

It was plain that their intention was to circle their intended victim.

"Stand where you are, and don't try to get closer!" warned the young man, his eyes flashing dangerously.

"Rot!" ejaculated Manley. "If you try to use that weapon, Henderson, you're the only one who is pretty certain to be killed. Put up your weapon and carry yourself like a man."

"But what do you want of me?"

"We want an explanation of how you came to be in the company of that fellow whom you saw off at the train. And what is your connection with him?"

"If you expect an answer to that——"

"We don't expect; we insist," Manley broke in, coldly.

"I shall not answer you."

"Then, Henderson, we will tell you how we construe the affair. That fellow whom you followed and protected at the train was the liar who carried a false message out on the sledge coast this afternoon. That message came near costing a dozen lives. As you are caught with the rascal, and refuse to explain, we charge you with being behind the outrage. For that reason, we mean to settle with you!"

"Keep off."

But Frank, with his eyes full on Henderson's, stepped boldly forward.

Joe and Humphrey, on either flank, did the same.

The maneuver seemed to rattle their enemy.

For, even if he had the nerve to fire on one of them, he could feel absolutely certain that the other two would reach and reckon with him.

"You might as well drop the gun," sneered Frank. "It isn't going to make any difference with us."

After an instant of perplexity, Paul Henderson did slip the revolver into his pocket.

Then, like a flash, he turned and began to run at his best speed.

But, with a cry that was much like the bay of a hound, Humphrey leaped forward after him.

It was a short chase. Humphrey was no slow runner. He overtook his man, grabbed him by the collar and yanked him back prostrate just as Manley and Joe jogged up.

Down went Humphrey on top of his man, then looked up at his leader.

"Well?" demanded Humph, drily, "Who's to have the first chance?"

"Oh, you young scoundrels will repent this!" gritted Henderson.

"Shut up!" ordered Humph.

Down came a clenched fist, landing squarely on Henderson's mouth.

His lips were cut; the blood flowed.

"Yank him to his feet!" Joe ordered, hoarsely.

No sooner had Humphrey obeyed than Joe swung and landed.

Henderson reeled, pitched, and struck the ground some feet away.

"Get up!" ordered Manley, sternly, towering over the wretch.

"You'll be sor——" began Henderson.

"Get up!"

There was something in the sharp command that made the fellow obey.

Frank's fist caught him on the nose—not breaking it, but bringing a bright stream of blood.

Again Henderson had fallen.

But now Humphrey stood over him.

"Get up!" he ordered. "It's my turn again!"

"Do you young devils intend to pound me to death?" gasped the frightened victim.

"Never mind our plans! Get up, or take a worse dose on the ground!"

Trembling, Paul Henderson rose to his feet.

But now, Humphrey, catching the fellow's coat with his left hand, employed his open right hand in raining blow after blow on Henderson's head.

This went on until Frank's cooler judgment prevailed, and he stopped the work of vengeance.

"Now, Henderson, listen to me," Manley ordered. "If you open your mouth to make a single threat, this whole thing will be done over again, and more severely. For, understand that we do not admit that you have any grievance. All the grounds for complaint are on our side. It will be of no use for you to deny that you were behind the outrage that put a dozen lives in danger this afternoon. We know that you are responsible, for you were fool enough to show yourself with the wretch. We have punished you—not as much as you deserve—but we don't claim the right to kill you. Take what you have got; go home and think it over, and think many times, after this, before you choose to place yourself in our way again. You may think of having us arrested. You can do it after the way we have assaulted you. But, if you use your right, you will find yourself under arrest, too. Now, don't attempt to say a word to us, but start to walk home—and keep on walking. Are you ready? Go!"

Not for an instant did young Henderson hesitate.

He had learned his lesson well enough to understand that to linger, or to attempt to say anything, would be only to invite another and much rougher thrashing.

So he wheeled and started.

Nor, as he walked, did he turn once to look back.

The three Up and At 'Em Boys remained in the middle of the road, staring grimly after the discomfited wretch.

"We didn't give him enough," growled Joe.

"If we had done more," remarked Manley, "we might not have known when to stop."

"I'll bet he's boiling," chuckled Humphrey.

"No," rejoined Frank. "He's planning."

"Planning what?" inquired Lon.

"He feels as low down as any worm, just now," smiled Manley. "But he's reflecting that every worm turns. Fel-

lows, we'll have our day of reckoning with the automobile gang."

"Before that happens," gritted Joe, "Henderson will do well to move and leave no address!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE BAD MAN TURNS ON THE GOOD.

In their haste to get after the bearer of the lie, Frank and Joe had forgotten Tod.

Young Owen, not feeling that he had any invitation to await the outcome of the affair, had driven home, and so had missed the vigorous outcome of the affair.

Frank and his friends tramped back into the town, stopping at the police-station.

Here they found Chief Gerrity, to whom they related what had passed.

"It's too bad, in a way," said the chief of police. "Now, young Henderson knows for certain that he is suspected in the automobile affair."

"He can't be certain of it," Frank argued. "All he has any reason to know is that we ran down the liar who brought that message. We found him in the company of the liar, whom he helped to escape. Then we followed Henderson and thumped him on suspicion that he was at the bottom of that fearful coasting crash. What else can he be sure of?"

"I hope he reasons it out that way," mused the chief.

"But as to the liar?" Frank pursued. "Have you any word of his capture?"

"No; nor am I likely to. A mile and a half beyond Bradford the rogue pulled the train's bell-cord, and then, when the train slowed up, he slipped from the train and vanished. He was smart enough to remember that we could telephone ahead for his arrest."

"And what have you heard as to the owner of that automobile?"

"Nothing yet. I'm still waiting."

"You were going to detail one of your men to shadow Henderson? What of that?"

"After thinking it over," replied Chief Gerrity, "I decided that I hadn't a man clever enough to do the job well. So I've let it go at keeping a man at the railway station. If young Henderson tries to go away on a train, he's to be nabbed."

"Then one of your men was at the depot when we had our trouble there?"

"Yes."

"Yet he didn't arrest Henderson."

"Because Henderson didn't try to board the train."

"Candidly, chief, have you any hope of solving this mystery?" Frank asked, bluntly.

"I hope to. That's all I can say," came the answer.

Frank drummed with his fingers on top of the chief's desk.

"You seem impatient, Manley," commented Gerrity.

"Well, chief, we had intended to leave this affair wholly to you; but now we can't be too patient. Paul Henderson has tried to injure myself and my friends. Now, we must take a hand in the game, in order to pay that fellow back."

"I thought you did that, a half an hour ago," smiled the chief of police.

"As far as it was wise to do, with our fists," Manley corrected. "But we haven't even a remote feeling that we've done enough to Henderson."

"You're keen for revenge."

"It isn't revenge, exactly," Frank retorted. "It's a good deal a matter of self-defence. Henderson will feel that he must revenge himself for that beating. He isn't the kind of fellow to stop at much, so I feel that the only way for us to be safe is to land him behind bars, or else drive him out of the country. I don't care which. But we can't leave him at large to plot more outrages against us."

"I would go and arrest him now for his share in that automobile affair," said Chief Gerrity, thoughtfully. "But I haven't a shadow of proof on which a judge would hold him."

"That's why I was in hopes you had news about the owner of the automobile. That news would lead you to Henderson's confederates."

"I'll telephone you, Manley, the moment I hear anything."

"Then I'll go home now. It won't do me any harm to rest up a bit. I believe my ankle will be swollen to double size by night."

"How will you get home?"

"Have to go in a carriage."

"Then I'll telephone for one."

Within ten minutes a closed carriage was at the door.

Frank drove first to the hospital, where he learned that Hal, Jackets and Foster had already started for Woodstock.

Their own drive took them past the field where the crash had occurred.

"I can't get over my stupidity," Frank muttered, ruefully, as he gazed out of the cab window at the field.

"I'm not surprised that you bit," Joe disputed. "I call it a mighty clever trick that was played on you. Not one fellow in ten thousand would have suspected anything wrong in such a seemingly innocent message."

"I shall always look upon it as a big mistake," Frank sighed. "Why, with the men we had on the runners, we might have put two athletic clubs practically out of business. As it is, I am afraid some of the fellows will never be much good in gym, track or field."

"Oh, nonsense!" protested Joe. "When fellows of our age are not killed they get quickly over their hurts."

Frank reached his home, bringing his mother the first word she had received of the accident.

He explained, merely, that there had been a mistake in the signaling, and Mrs. Manley, finding that he was no worse hurt than he had been before in sports, felt no alarm.

But through the evening our hero waited in vain for word from Chief Gerrity.

Toward nine o'clock, however, there was a ring at the bell.

Frank answered, limping a little as he went toward the front door.

A cab stood at the curb, while the driver was on the porch.

"Sorry to disturb you," said the man, "but Mrs. Spofford wanted to know if you feel able to drive over to the house."

"Hal——?" cried Manley, in quick alarm.

"He's quite a bit worse—the young man."

"Why, I had an idea that it was not serious," Frank cried, in dismay.

"The young man's out of his head, sir."

"For how long?"

"Two hours, I believe. There are two doctors there now."

"I'll go with you at once," Frank agreed, quickly.

He hastened back to his mother, explaining that Hal's condition was worse, and that he had been sent for.

Then, quickly, Frank got into his overcoat and cap.

He stepped into the cab, and the driver closed the door.

Occupied with his own serious thoughts, Manley did not note the fact that the curtains were down over both the cab windows.

Even had he noticed this, very likely he would not have suspected that anything was wrong.

For all his thoughts were now of Hal.

Hal, that good chum, seriously ill.

"Mrs. Spofford wouldn't have sent if the case were not serious," Frank murmured, wretchedly. "I wonder if the poor old chap got a brain injury, or some internal hurt?"

And then, a moment later, he cried, wretchedly:

"All my fault, too! That fearful mistake of mine in taking such a word from a stranger!"

There were tears in Manley's eyes as the idea was driven home to him that he, alone, was responsible for whatever suffering Hal was enduring at this moment.

Now, it came dimly to Frank at last, that, at the rate at which the cab was moving, the trip to Hal's house was consuming a good deal of time.

"Surely, we ought to be at the Spofford house by this time," flashed through our hero's mind.

Bending over to the left, he raised the curtain that hung over that window.

Then, instantly, a cry of amazement escaped him.

"Out beyond the town? What can this mean?"

There could be but one answer, of course.

A trap!

Paul Henderson's, beyond a doubt.

"We'll see if we can fool him," thought Manley, grimly, after the first flash of alarm had passed.

Softly but firmly he tried to open the left door of the swiftly-moving cab.

It did not yield in the least.

Locked, beyond a question.

Desperately, he tried the other door.

That, too, appeared to be locked fast.

"There's just a fighting chance of getting out of this safely," muttered Frank, sinking back on the cushions. "What is that chance?"

Think as he would, he could perceive but one hope of escaping from the vehicle.

That lay in smashing the glass of one of the doors, and doing it so softly as to give no alarm to the man on the box.

"Here goes, then!"

Bending forward, Frank delivered a rather light blow with his fist against the glass.

"Nothing doing," he grimaced. "A trifle harder, this time, then."

But the glass proved too thick and enduring to yield to any light attack.

Finally, with a tightening of the muscles around his mouth, Frank struck out with full force.

Crash! There was a loud, smashing noise. Half the glass in the window fell before that assault.

But immediately the cab slowed down, then came to a stop.

"Stop that, you young tempest!" roared a voice.

"That's not the driver speaking," quavered Manley.

In another second he knew that it was not, for the owner of the voice, jumping from the box, showed his face close to the shattered window.

"Don't try to get out!" menaced the apparition. "If you do, you'll eat buckshot!"

In the dim light afforded by the cab's lights, Manley saw the muzzles of a "sawed-off" shot-gun that was turned on him.

The "sawed-off" gun is a favorite weapon with express messengers and bank guards.

It is a double-barreled shot-gun with only nine or ten inches of barrel.

Both barrels are loaded with heavy charges of buck-shot or slugs.

Discharged, this gun riddles everything in front of it at close quarters.

But Manley's gaze traveled from the gun to the man behind it.

This latterly worthy was enveloped in a long ulster that came nearly to the ground.

Over his head he wore a fur cap that covered the face, as well as the crown of the head.

There were holes for the eyes, nose and mouth. The cap was as good as a mask.

"Caught, fairly, by a fellow who means business!" flashed dismally through Manley's mind.

Yet, as he leaned back from the staring muzzles of the gun, our hero challenged:

"Your crowd is on the run a bit already, isn't it?"

"What do you mean?" demanded the stranger, gruffly.

"Why, you've come down from automobiles to cabs," jeered Frank. "Last night you were traveling over forty horse-power. To-night you've had to 'get a horse'."

"I'm glad you can see something funny in the situation," sneered the man behind the gun. "But from now on you'll find that it's going to take a good deal to make you laugh!"

"Which one of the gang are you?" demanded Manley.

with pretended curiosity. "You're not Henderson, and you're not the liar—at least not the liar we met this afternoon."

Click! Both hammers of the gun were snapped backward.

CHAPTER X.

MANLEY PLAYS THE FOX.

"Get back there in the further corner!" ordered the man with the gun.

He emphasized his command by a sweep of his left hand.

Frank slid to the corner of the seat furthest from the broken window.

It would be worse than useless to defy this man, who held the key to the situation, and who, plainly, was not afraid to use that key.

"Now, keep quiet, and don't try any funny business," came the next order. "Remember that I'm just as wideawake as you are. If you try to make a single move I shall press these triggers and blow you to kingdom come!"

"And he can do it, too," quivered Manley, inwardly.

Click! With his left hand the stranger had unlocked the cab door.

"I'm going to get in," he announced. "The muzzles of this clever little gun will be turned on you, and there won't be a ghost of a show for you if you are foolish enough to do anything that you aren't told to."

"I understand," nodded Manley, briefly and drily.

"You understand perfectly?"

"Perfectly."

"Then we ought not to have any trouble."

With great caution, and with vigilant eyes turned on his captive, the stranger slid into the cab, seating himself on the front seat.

The gun rested across the stranger's knees, the muzzles still staring openly at our hero.

"If that gun should go off," muttered Frank, to himself. "it would rip out everything from my head down to my knees!"

"You're not going to try to fight?" laughed the stranger, gruffly.

"Why should I?" retorted Manley.

"I have heard that it is one of your habits to fight."

"You have been making inquiries about me, then?"

"Of course."

"Did any one tell you that I was a fool?"

"Why?"

"I would be a fool to fight a man who has a machine gun turned on me!"

The stranger laughed, and Frank, who had had all his attention centered on his unknown enemy, now became conscious that the cab was again rolling smoothly along.

Frank remembered the fable of the man who had covered himself with the lion's skin.

Finding that the lion's skin was not quite large enough, the man in the fable had pieced it out with a bit taken from a fox's skin.

"This is where I shall need to play the fox," Frank muttered.

"You are drowsy?" asked the stranger, after a pause.

For Frank had leaned back and closed his eyes.

"It hurts my eyes to look at that cannon all the time," Frank answered, drily. "So I am resting my eyes by closing them."

The stranger laughed, disagreeably.

But Manley's eyes, though they appeared to be fully closed, were not.

They were open just a slit—enough to enable the young athlete to watch every move that his companion might make.

Very wideawake and alert was that stranger.

His gaze never once wandered from his young captive.

The gun, resting across the stranger's knees, was trained full on Manley, and its owner's fingers were ceaselessly on the triggers.

Both hammers were at full cock.

A move on Frank's part, and the fingers could instantly close on the triggers, both barrels pouring their contents into the young athlete.

"The fox's skin is needed," muttered Manley, as he restlessly surveyed the situation. "It may not even be enough to save me."

Still he watched, very wideawake, despite the fact that his eyes seemed to be wholly closed.

He half hoped that the man behind the gun might fall into a little doze—or, at least, let his attention wander for a moment.

This, however, did not happen.

The further they rode, the more alert the stranger appeared to be.

"Something desperate will have to be done, then," Frank muttered.

The more he thought it over, the more firmly convinced the young athlete became that only one style of attack could succeed.

It was a desperate chance, and failure meant death, but it was the only chance.

As he watched for his opportunity, Frank found himself trembling from head to foot.

"This won't do," he growled, inwardly. "Brace up, old fellow!"

By sheer effort of strong will he controlled the trembling. He became tense, cool, ready for the chance.

Suddenly his foot shot up, landing squarely against the barrels of the gun.

Around the muzzles swerved—away from him.

Two deafening explosions, so close together that they sounded almost as one, crashed out on the air.

In that same instant Manley hurled himself across the cab, his right fist landing crushingly on the stranger's jaw.

It was a knockout, a complete one, and the stranger fell back, insensible.

The charge of slugs in the gun's barrels had half-shattered the door and the back of the cab.

Bits of wadding had set the cushions smouldering ly afire, but to this Manley paid no heed for the moment.

His whole thought was centered on getting off his own overcoat and the stranger's.

These he changed, in feverish haste, as the cab came to a halt.

Then the stranger's cap Frank lifted, revealing a bearded face, the hair and beard being slightly streaked with gray.

But of this Frank had only a lightning glimpse, for what he had to do must be done in the utmost haste.

Lifting the stranger, Manley flung him into a corner on the back seat, and dropped a handkerchief over the head and face.

Pulling the masking-cap over his own head and face, Manley dropped on to the front seat just as the driver appeared at the shattered door.

"What's happened, sir?" demanded the driver, hoarsely.

"Gun went off by accident," Frank whispered. "It's all right."

"You didn't kill the young man, sir?.

"No, no!" Frank whispered back. "The young man has fainted from fright, but he'll soon be all right. You can see, for yourself, where the charge went. It didn't strike him."

"You know, sir," trembled the driver, "it was in the bargain that there wasn't to be any killing."

"I know," Frank whispered back, secure in the protection that the masking-cap gave his face from detection.

While speaking, our hero had felt in the pockets of his borrowed overcoat.

There, as he had hoped, he found extra shells for loading the gun.

He reloaded the piece, turned it on the still figure in the corner, and then whispered to the driver:

"You understand your instructions?"

"Yes, sir."

"Repeat them."

"I'm to drive by lonely roads until I reach the house."

"Tell me what house, and where, so I may see that you understand."

"Why, the old Driscoll farmhouse, out on the North road, two miles from Bradford."

"That's right," Frank whispered back, promptly. "And what are you to do when you get there?"

"One of your friends will hand me the thousand dollars promised me, and then I'm to drive away and keep my mouth shut."

"Have you been drinking?" Frank asked, in a sudden, sharp whisper.

"Why, no, sir; of course not!"

"Let me see if you're sober. Who are the friends that I'm to meet there?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Henderson is the only one I know about. I don't know the other two gentlemen."

"And, when you get your money, you'll forget that you know anything about Mr. Henderson?"

"Of course I will, sir. It wouldn't pay me to blab, or I'd be in trouble with the law myself."

"That's all right, my man. Go back to your box and drive on. Don't drive too fast, though, or that would attract attention."

"I understand, sir."

The cab was soon in motion again.

Frank, with the reloaded gun in his hands, heaved a sigh of huge relief.

"I can't say that this is a tremendous improvement, either," he muttered, grimly. "I've got the best of things for a moment, but I've got to face the whole gang in a few minutes if I don't change the programme a bit. It's a bit better to face them with a gun in my hands—that's all."

But, suddenly, a thought came to Manley that made him jump and quiver.

Thrusting the gun carefully behind him, Manley arose and bent over the stranger.

The young athlete kept both fists and his knees ready to meet any attack that might be attempted along his own foxy lines.

But the stranger was still knocked out. He was breathing, but the eyes, when Manley pried up the lids, were dull and lustreless.

In his hip pockets Manley always carried two lengths of strong, serviceable cord, ready prepared with a noose at one end.

One of these cords he now brought out, and quickly, deftly, bound the stranger's wrists together.

Then the other cord went around the stranger's ankles, the end being brought up and made fast to the cord around the wrists.

"It won't do him any good if he does come to now," chuckled Frank, as he rose from his task. "He's bottled!"

Sitting back on the front seat and picking up the sawed-off gun, Frank groped for the cord that connected with the driver. He found it and pulled it sharply.

The cab stopped sharply, out on a lonely bit of road, where there was not an inhabited house in sight.

But Manley, opening the unlocked door, stepped quickly out.

"What's up?" called the driver.

"I'm going to ride on the box," Manley whispered.

In a twinkling he had climbed to a seat beside the driver.

"I hope you haven't fooled me, sir," faltered the jehu.

"What do you mean?"

"You haven't killed the young man inside?"

"No: but you're pretty certain to be killed if you make a single false move!" Frank uttered, suddenly, in his natural voice.

He spoke loudly, too, and the horrified cabman became quickly aware of the fact that the muzzles of the sawed-off gun were pressing against his side.

In his amazement and fright the driver nearly fell from the box.

"You're not the fellow that hired me!" he shrieked.

"No, I'm not," Manley retorted, sternly. "I'm the other fellow, and I've got the gun and the upper hand.

now. Try the slightest trick, and—pouf! I'll blow you plumb off the box!"

"I'm going to give orders. Drive on!"

"What——"

"Shut up and drive on. Don't ask any questions, for I'm nervous and excited to-night, and might pull the triggers by mistake." Frank declared, grimly.

"But——"

"DRIVE ON!"

Cabby obeyed.

Frank gave his whole attention to the fellow, determined that the driver should not find any chance to get the upper hand.

"To your left," Frank ordered, as they came to a cross-road.

"Where——"

"To your left!" Frank almost thundered, jabbing the muzzles harder against cabby's side.

To the left they turned.

At other corners they turned, by Frank's orders.

"Where on earth are you going?" Cabby demanded, tremulously, as he found himself driving into the inhabited part of Bradford.

"Your whole business is to drive, or to roll off the box with two charges of buckshot in you," Manley retorted.

On they drove until the young athlete espied a policeman ahead of them on the sidewalk.

"Whoa! Stop here!" Frank commanded, sharply. "Officer—here—quick!"

Scenting some trouble, the policeman made a quick bound toward them.

Cabby groaned, but it was too late to make even a desperate attempt at escape.

"Who are you? What do you want?" demanded the policeman.

He looked almost aghast as he saw Manley's masked face and espied the murderous-looking weapon.

"See that this fellow doesn't escape," begged Frank, "and I'll get down and explain."

With a sudden bound Frank reached the sidewalk, then turned to aim the weapon at the driver.

"Here," ordered the policeman, sharply, "none of that!"

"I won't shoot unless he tries to get away," Manley retorted, lowering the weapon. "Officer, you may know who I am. I'm Frank Manley, of Woodstock."

"Frank Manley—Woodstock!" gasped the amazed policeman. "Of course I know who you are. But what on earth——"

"This driver, and the fellow inside the cab, are two people whom your chief will be very glad to see," Frank broke in. "I'll go there with you. The chief will give you explanations, if you need any. Watch that rascal on the box an instant. If he tries to whip up I'll run after him and shoot him off the box. But I want a look at the party inside."

The "party" was still inside when Frank opened the door to look in. He was conscious, too, by this time, and was gnashing his teeth in his fury.

"You've played a nice trick, haven't you?" roared the stranger. "But the end is not yet!"

"Your end is safe enough, anyway," grinned the young athlete. "You should have known better than to undertake such a job as you tried."

It was clear enough that the stranger couldn't use his hands or feet, but Frank turned to the policeman with:

"Officer, it may be just as well if you walk beside the cab to see that the 'gentleman' inside doesn't get away. I'll give all my attention to the man on the box, and we'll get them to the station-house."

Fortunately, the way to the police station was through side streets, and the station-house itself was on a little-traveled side street.

Hence no crowd had gathered by the time that the cab drew up near the station.

"Come down and sit inside," Frank ordered the cabman.

Shaking in every limb, the jehu obeyed, taking his seat opposite the bearded stranger.

"You can watch them all right now," Frank smiled to the officer, handing him the sawed-off gun. "Keep them here a minute, please. I want to have a little fun with your chief."

Folding up the mask flap to the cap, Frank stepped, smilingly, into Chief Gerrity's office.

"Oh, here you are?" cried Gerrity. "I've been doing nothing but telephone for you."

"Any news?" asked Frank, with a show of interest.

"News?" retorted Gerrity, with enthusiam. "News? I should say so! Manley, those New York police are dandies. I guess they've given me all the information I need. The latest known owner of that automobile is Jansen, a well-known turfman and gambler. Moreover, they are both members of the Utopia Club in New York City."

"Who are 'they'?" Manley asked, quietly.

"Why, Jansen and Paul Henderson. And, moreover, there's another chap they've been rather thick with at the Utopia Club—a shady sort of broker named Emerson. Now, don't you think Jansen and Emerson are the two men we want to look up along with Paul Henderson?"

"It looks that way," Frank nodded. "I wonder whether it's Jansen or Emerson that I've got in the cab outside?"

CHAPTER XI.

BUT FOXES CAN BE SHOT!

If Frank had exploded a bomb in the room, Gerrity could not have jumped with greater alacrity.

"What's that?" demanded the police official, eagerly.

"Let me see that telegram you had in your hand," requested Frank. "Does it give descriptions of Emerson and Jansen?"

"Yes; but what were you saying?"

Frank read quickly through the telegram.

"It's Emerson we've got outside," he said, quietly.

Chief Gerrity, not waiting to hear any more, had run out into the street.

Frank followed.

The cord around the stranger-captive's ankles was cut.

Then both prisoners were led inside the station-house.

"So it's you, Hawkins?" demanded the chief, looking the cabman over. "How came you to get into this fix?"

"Oh, Paul Henderson has often used him for shady cab driving," said Frank.

He spoke carelessly, but saw by the cabman's face that he had hit upon the truth.

"Have you got anything to say?" asked Chief Gerrity, turning to the stranger who had been the man behind the gun.

"Not a word—now," came the surly answer.

"It's quite different, sometimes, when Mr. Emerson, broker, is talking with customers," laughed Manley.

The stranger gave a great start, paled, tried to laugh off his confusion, and then stared sulkily at the floor.

"Not a word to say now—eh, Mr. Emerson?" Frank insisted.

"Not a word," came the gruff answer.

"Why don't you lock him up, then, chief?" Frank hinted. "Then I can take you to where his pals are waitng for him."

This time both the chief and the bearded man jumped—the chief with eager curiosity, and the prisoner in dismay.

"Oh, my friend, you monkeyed with the buzz-saw all right to-night," jeered Manley.

"Take these prisoners down and lock them up in number six," ordered Chief Gerrity. "While I'm about I'll go downstairs, too, and see that the job is done right. Mr. Emerson, for I believe that is your name, when I have a little more time to talk with you I shall be glad to hear how you stumbled into Manley's trap."

"It was while he was trying to set his trap for me," laughed Frank.

The chief of police was quickly upstairs again.

"Manley, this is one of the greatest strokes! That description of Emerson tallies to a jot with your fellow. How on earth did you catch him?"

"I didn't, exactly," Frank replied, modestly. "He caught me, first off."

"Humph! He should have known better. He would have known better if he belonged in these parts."

"Paul Henderson didn't know better than to set him at it."

"Henderson isn't often in Bradford. He's really a New Yorker."

"He'll be a jail-bird, soon, I guess."

"You said you knew where the rest of the gang are"

"I know only what the cabman told me. But it'll be worth looking into."

"Worth looking into?" echoed the chief. "I should say so!"

"Chief, that cab is a pretty disreputable-looking one by this time. If you can have it put up and get a new cab that resembles it we can make a start out for the Driscoll place."

"Driscoll's? Why, the old house hasn't been occupied for two years."

"That's where I believe our people are."

Chief Gerrity busied himself with ordering another cab, and with calling in two policemen from the street, the officer who had come in with our hero being assigned to watch the two prisoners in the basement cell.

At last everything was in readiness. The chief, his two officers and our hero seated themselves inside the new cab, which rolled away on its trip to Driscoll's.

As they rode, Frank related the happenings of the evening.

Gerrity was astonished, but elated.

"You played the fox all right, Manley!" he declared, warmly.

"It was the only animal that would serve," Frank smiled. "A lion would only have got its pelt filled with buckshot."

"But why on earth did those rascals want to make a prisoner of you?" asked Bradford's police chief.

"For one of two reasons. Either Paul Henderson wanted revenge for the bully beating we gave him this afternoon, or else the gang though I knew more than I did. Or, perhaps, they figured that my mysterious disappearance would scare off further pursuit by making every one afraid of the mysterious automobile gang."

"As you must have noticed in the telegram," the chief answered, "no such criminal gang is known to the New York police."

"Of course not," Frank retorted. "The automobile gang was a name by which Paul Henderson hoped to scare his uncle from reporting the crime to the police. I suspected that much from the first."

"But the plunder?" mused the chief. "I wonder if we'll find that all right?"

"If we find all the rest of the gang up at Driscoll's," predicted Manley, "we're pretty likely to find the loot, too. Thieves are not often very far from their stealings."

"We're getting pretty near Driscoll's," reported one of the policemen.

Chief Gerrity reached up and pulled the check-strap.

"I want you two men to go ahead and station yourselves outside the house, where you can stop any one who tries to get away," ordered the chief. "If any one tries to escape, order him to stop. If he doesn't, then shoot—and shoot to hit! We won't waste any nonsense on a crowd like this!"

For a few minutes the cab remained where it was, until the two policemen had had time to post themselves in hiding.

Then Gerrity gave the word to go ahead.

"Manley, if you'd rather," suggested the police official, "you can remain in the cab. You've no call to risk being shot."

"Having gone this far in the game," Frank returned, "I guess I'll stay in until the last card has been played."

They were going up the driveway now. The cab stopped close to the front door.

"As they're expecting me," quivered Frank, "let me go in first, if I get a chance. Keep out of sight for a moment."

Gerrity sank back on the cushions, yet tense and ready, as the front door of the house was opened a foot or so.

There was no light there, but Frank could see a head peering out at the doorway as he stepped out of the cab.

"Don't be rough," he called back over his shoulder in Gerrity's direction. "I know you've got the upper hand. I'll be good."

"That's Manley, all right, all right!" called Paul Henderson's jubilant voice.

"Yes, it's Manley," admitted Frank, in a voice of pretended resignation. "Nice people you are!"

He stepped boldly up to the door, which opened a little wider, while Henderson's voice called:

"What makes you so slow, Emerson?"

"He's coming," replied Frank.

Like a flash our hero hurled himself forward, wedging himself fairly in the doorway, so that the barrier could not be closed to him.

"What's this?" choked Henderson, in amazement.

"Not the crowd you expected—that's all!" roared Chief Gerrity, leaping out of the cab and rushing forward. "Back in there with you!"—putting his shoulder to the door and driving the astounded scoundrels inside. "Don't try to fight— the house is surrounded!"

Manley and the chief forced their way into the hallway, Gerrity drawing an electric flashlight with his left hand and flooding the scene with light.

Paul Henderson and another, older and larger man, confronted them.

"Let's not have any nonsense, gentlemen," proposed Gerrity, in a quiet tone of mastery. "You must have a lighted room here somewhere. Lead us to it, and we'll sit down and talk this matter over quietly. As Henderson is a young man of pretty prominent family, we may find an easy way out of this miserable mess."

The chief's tone was oily and soothing. It seemed to promise that Henderson, having wealthy connections, might find a way out of a scrape that would land a poor man in jail.

Paul Henderson caught at the bait.

"Of course there's a way out of it," he laughed. "My uncle can be persuaded to put up whatever money is needed. I'm glad you're a sensible man, chief. Step in here."

The young man threw open the door of a well-lighted room, whose closely drawn shades prevented any light from being seen outside.

It was a sitting-room, dingily and shabbily furnished, but there was a rousing fire going in the stove and three lamps shed light over the scene.

"Of course you understand that I have policemen outside, and that any attempt to escape would be worse than foolish?" propounded Chief Gerrity.

"We have your word for it," admitted Paul Henderson, uneasily.

The other man did not speak, but his flashing dark eyes roved incessantly from Manley to the chief and back again.

"Let's all sit down here around the table," proposed the chief. "We can talk better that way."

Henderson hesitated. The other man leaned, silently, against the mantel, his eyes still roving over the faces before him.

"I hope I shan't have to make my request an order," spoke Gerrity, a trifle sharply. "It is my wish that we all sit around this table so that we can talk cosily. And, to make sure that all is square and above-board, I wish you two men to sit with both hands resting on the table."

"Why——" began Henderson.

"Because I order it, then," retorted Gerrity. "If you wish to come to any easy terms with me you must do as I ask."

Paul Henderson drew a chair up to the table and sat with his hands in plain sight.

But the other man did not offer to stir away from the mantel.

"You are wanted at the table also, Mr. Jansen," spoke Gerrity, sharply. "If you do not choose to please me here, I shall have to send you to the station-house, where you will have to obey, Mr. Jansen."

At this calling and repetition of his name, the older man started, paled a trifle, then sauntered to the table, seating himself with both hands resting on the table.

Manley, too, seated himself coolly, but the chief remained standing.

"Gentlemen, you expected to see Manley here to-night, but in different company," smiled the chief. "Tell them how it happened, Frank."

"Not that there's much to tell," laughed the young athlete. "I started this evening as the guest of your Mr. Emerson, as you had all planned. But something happened that changed the programme."

"As a result of the change," laughed Gerrity, "Manley came to the station-house with Emerson and a cab driver, and they are now occupying a cell."

Paul Henderson's jaw dropped. Plainly, he was badly frightened.

But Jansen stared at Manley with eyes that glowed like coals.

Chief Gerrity again broke in upon the silence.

"As you will understand, gentlemen, we are now in possession of all the facts. Now, as the first step toward a satisfactory settlement of this affair, all the plunder must be turned over to me. Fortunately, you have that right at hand."

Paul Henderson opened his mouth to speak, but Jansen, speaking his first words, forestalled the younger criminal.

"We have not the plunder, as you call it, sir," he replied, hurriedly.

"Don't waste time," said Gerrity, impatiently. "We happen to know that you have the loot stolen from old Mr. Henderson's vault."

"Then, if you know it all, find the stuff," sneered Jansen.

"The trouble is," said Gerrity, smoothly, "that if we have to go to the trouble of finding this stolen wealth I shall not then be able or willing to extend any mercy to young Mr. Henderson and his associates in this—this—er, unfortunate affair."

"Gerrity is a dandy!" thought Frank, with lively admiration.

Paul Henderson glanced doubtingly at Jansen. The latter blazed back at him with menacing eyes.

There was a silence, the younger criminal shifting uneasily in his chair, while Jansen sat back with stiff, unyielding sullenness.

"I am not going to press this matter, gentlemen," went on the chief. "If you do not care to meet my suggestions fully and frankly, then all that remains for me to do is to call in my policemen and place you under arrest, like ordinary criminals."

Now Jansen spoke again.

"Chief, it seems to me that we had better understand each other. Do I understand that in case we do our best to please you we are at liberty to go where we please?"

"That wasn't what I said," retorted Gerrity. "'Trying' won't do. You must turn over to me all the plunder stolen from Mr. Henderson's vault."

"Even if we were able to do such a thing," insisted Jansen, "would it then be understood that you would allow us to go in peace and safety?"

"I didn't say that," hedged the chief of police. "I said it might make matters easier for you."

"But you didn't promise that it would?" insisted the man.

"I can't promise anything."

"Oh!" sneered Jansen.

There was a look almost of mirth, now, in the eyes that had been blazing.

"You are an expert at bluffing, chief," laughed the fellow.

"Any compliment from you is bound to be appreciated," grinned Gerrity.

While Manley sat by, enjoying the scene to the utmost, and murmuring:

"This Gerrity is a wonderful fellow. He can't be out-jollied in any company."

"In other words, Mr. Chief," pursued Jansen, bending forward and fixing his gaze on the police official, "you are playing the fox with us!"

"The fox?" laughed the chief. "Oh, no; I am not the fox. It is Manley, here, who is the fox. It is he, really, who has managed this whole affair so splendidly. It is to him, almost alone, that you owe the defeat of your interesting plan. He's a fox, I assure you."

"A fox?" repeated Jansen, ominously. "There's one unfortunate thing about being a fox."

"And what's that?" asked Gerrity, with interest.

"Foxes may be shot!" belched from Jansen's lips.

Like a flash he was up and bending forward over the table.

His right hand, which Jansen had slipped below the table without being detected, now leaped into sight, and something flashed.

With the swiftness of a juggler, Jansen thrust a revolver before Manley's face and pulled the trigger.

Report and flash came in the same swift instant.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOX OF WEALTH.

Frank Manley did not go down before that murderous shot.

A second shot rang out with the first.

Chief Gerrity had drawn and fired just in the nick of time.

His bullet struck the weapon in Jansen's hand, dashing the pistol aside and spoiling Jansen's aim.

Nor did Gerrity stop there.

As soon as he perceived that Manley was uninjured, the chief darted forward, grasping his own weapon by the smoking muzzle.

Whack! Struck squarely over the head by the butt of the policeman's weapon, Jansen went to the floor.

Gerrity piled on top of him.

In the excitement, Paul Henderson drew a revolver, irresolutely.

Frank saw the glint of the weapon in the young man's hand.

There was a grapple, a struggle, and Manley tossed the weapon across the room.

Click! The chief snapped handcuffs over the wrists of his prisoner.

"Got another pair?" asked Frank, coolly

"Yes."

"Then here's another candidate."

Paul Henderson, too, was handcuffed.

They helped the prisoners to seats on chairs.

Then Gerrity flew to the front door.

He was just in time, for, alarmed by the shots, one of his policemen was entering the house.

"Back on guard," ordered the chief. "We can handle things here."

Returning to the room, the Bradford chief looked his two men over.

"The game's all in for you two fellows," he announced.

"But one more rascal to bag," Frank suggested.

"Who?"

"The fellow who caused the coasting wreck this afternoon."

"But he left town."

"I believe he came back."

"Eh?"

"And I further believe that he's in the house now."

"Oho!"

"When the excitement was on," Frank smiled, "I thought I heard a stir in the next room."

Gerrity rushed to the connecting door, throwing it open.

"The room's empty," he reported.

"No matter. We'll find the fellow."

"If he's around."

"He's in the house, somewhere."

"Then I'll go on the hunt," proposed the chief. "You watch these two fellows."

Frank walked over to where Henderson's revolver had fallen, and picked it up.

Provided with his electric flashlight, Gerrity began to explore the rooms.

In five minutes he was back, driving before him a pallid, wretched-looking young man.

"The liar!" Frank exclaimed, wrathfully.

"Eh?"

"The fellow who caused the fearful wreck this afternoon. The scoundrel who brought me the false message about the turning on the course."

"Then you may want to settle with him?" hinted Gerrity. "If so, my back is turned.

Frank turned to regard the shrinking liar.

"I would like to pound you," vented Manley. "I'd enjoy throwing you to the floor and hammering you for five minutes."

"Two minutes ought to be enough," hinted the chief, drily.

"I'm not going to touch him," Frank replied. "Thrashing a helpless man, scoundrel though he may be, is out of my line."

"Then put this pair of handcuffs on him," suggested Bradford's chief, holding out another pair. "That may give you some satisfaction, Manley."

Click! snap! Another prisoner was placed on a chair.

"Now, if you fellows want to help," hinted Gerrity. "There ought to be a fortune somewhere in this house. As it's stolen treasure, and I'm a policeman, I naturally want it. Who'll earn my gratitude by telling me where it is?"

The trio remained silent.

"We've got the whole crew at last!" Frank broke in. "So, chief, you might as well call one of your policemen in here."

"The whole crew? Do you think so?"

"Well, we've got all the rascals who were in the automobile last night. This little fellow—the liar—was the chauffeur."

Gerrity stepped to the door, calling in one of his policemen and leaving the other still outside.

"Now, you and I can make a search of the house," Frank proposed.

Taking one of the lamps they went through the house, from room to room.

A half an hour was passed in the search, without avail.

They came, at last, to the kitchen.

"Not the most likely place," commented Gerrity.

"Nor unlikely, either," smiled Frank. "Men having money to burn are likely to hide it most anywhere. Speak-of money to burn, what place more likely than the wood-box?"

The box was well filled with wood. But Manley, with feverish haste, began to dump this out on the floor.

And there, away down at the bottom of the wood-box, they came upon another box.

It was of sheet-iron, of large size, and fastened with a Yale lock.

"I guess we've found what we wanted," quivered Gerrity. "If we can find the key on one of those fellows, all right. If not, we'll wait until we get to the station-house, and then use a can-opener."

In triumph they returned to the sitting-room, Manley bearing the box.

"And here's the key, I reckon," flashed Chief Gerrity, drawing one out of one of young Henderson's pockets.

He tried it in the lock. It fitted.

Then the chief threw up the lid.

Truly it was a box of wealth!

Cash, government bonds and jewelry—all there!

"The jig's up, and all the stuff recovered," smiled Manley, turning to young Henderson. "The automobile gang is exploded, too—an old woman's bogey story. The worst of it is that four such pleasant gentlemen must go to prison."

"Don't you believe it," sputtered Paul Henderson. "My uncle will never prosecute me."

"He don't need to," responded Chief Gerrity, lightly. "I'll attend to the prosecuting—with the aid of a hustling district-attorney."

"But I tell you, my uncle won't hear of my going to jail!" cried the nephew, tremulously.

"He hasn't anything to say about it," snapped the chief. "He'll simply be a witness. It's the judge and the jury that will settle your fate, young man—not your uncle."

"It's too bad, Henderson," muttered Frank, sinking into a chair by the table. "You had no reason to go wrong. Your uncle paid you an income, I suppose?"

"Yes," admitted the crestfallen nephew. "Six thousand dollars a year."

"And that wasn't enough for one young man?"

"It used to be," sighed Henderson.

"But you fell in with bad company—meaning these other fellows here. Then you needed more money, and they helped to show you how to get it. Your uncle was easily frightened. You fellows planned the story about the automobile gang. After you left the house with your pals you didn't return to the auto. You hurried around the corner to where that poor Hawkins was waiting with his cab. And so you were able to drive up to the house as if you had just arrived on the train from New York."

"You are reading the story like a wizard," young Henderson admitted, with a sickly smile.

"And then, on the spur of the moment, you closed the door of the vault on us."

"Yes, as you say—on the spur of the moment."

"That was the first thing that led me to suspect you," Manley went on, drily. "Had you not made that false step, I probably would not have suspected you, and you would not be in this present trouble."

"You fool!" snarled Jansen, fixing his burning gaze on young Henderson.

"Oh, you're all fools, fast enough!" retorted Manley, cheerily. "If you weren't you wouldn't have been caught. Criminals very seldom could be caught if it were not for the fool mistakes that they make."

"How were you fellows going to divide the spoils?" asked Chief Gerrity, curiously. "Evenly?"

"I was to get only five thousand dollars," admitted the liar. "The rest were to share equally."

"Then you are only an understrapper?" Manley asked.

"Emerson's clerk," said the liar. "I was let in only because I know how to run an automobile."

"Well, I guess we've got all we want—prisoners, boodle and evidence," grinned Chief Gerrity. "We'll send for another cab, so that we can go back to town as one big, jolly party."

Anything but jolly the prisoners looked as they were arraigned before the desk at the station-house.

The elder Mr. Henderson was sent for, and came quickly.

When he learned the part that Paul had played, his indignation was well-nigh boundless.

He promptly disowned the young man, and took no interest in the young man's subsequent defence.

All of the quartette went to prison for long terms. Hawkins, the cabman, escaped with the comparatively light term of one year's imprisonment.

But we are anticipating a little.

Frank, as soon as the first excitement had passed, called up Joe on the telephone.

First of all, our hero inquired after Hal, Jackets and Foster.

All were as comfortable as could be expected after their accident.

None would suffer permanent injury.

But Joe, when he heard how the case of the automobile gang had turned out, was all but furious.

"To think that I should have been left out at the finish!" he wailed over the wire.

"It wasn't my fault, Joe, old fellow," Frank laughed. "I couldn't help it. You weren't invited on that cab ride—that was all. I didn't control the invitations, you know."

"Well, what can't be cured must be endured," sighed Joe. "But old Mr. Henderson must be glad to get his treasure back."

Mr. Henderson, indeed, must have been pleased. For, of the recovered treasure, he presented, by way of reward, one thousand dollars to Chief Gerrity and the same amount to Frank and to each of his coasting crew on that memorable night.

This reward having been promised while in the station-house, Manley felt blithely that he could indulge his aching ankle by taking a cab ride home to Woodstock.

But even while he was speaking with the driver another carriage went slowly by, then stopped.

"Frank Manley, by all that's wonderful!" cried a familiar voice. "What! Going to hire a carriage to take you home when we're here?"

"Mr. Dunstan!" greeted Manley, in great pleasure.

"Jump in, my boy."

An invitation that Frank accepted with all the more delight because his sweetheart, Kitty Dunstan, was also in that carriage.

"How do you come to be over here?" inquired Mr. Dunstan, as they started off.

"I might ask the same question of you, sir," laughed Frank.

"We have been over here to a reception. And, I may add," finished Mr. Dunstan, pointedly, "that we didn't wind up at a police station."

"I'm glad that I did," Frank exclaimed. "It seems that I'm to be a thousand dollars richer through some little happenings of last night and to-night."

"Then there has been more trouble?" divined Kitty, eagerly.

"Other folks' trouble," responded Manley. "Do you know the Hendersons, Mr. Dunstan."

"I know both Henderson and his nephew. Exceptionally fine men, both of them."

"You may need to change your opinion of the nephew, sir. At this present moment he's just where he deserves to be—in a cell back in the police station."

"A story," hinted Kitty, archly, "would be an entertaining thing on a five-mile ride."

Thereupon, Frank told them the whole story.

The narration lasted until they reached Woodstock.

The Dunstan carriage took Frank to his own gate.

As he stepped out he walked rather lamely. Possibly he was pretending a bit.

"Oh, that mean ankle!" Kitty cried, sympathetically. "I must help you up to the door."

And help him she did, even to the other side of the storm-door, just before Frank fitted his latch-key.

In that moment's interval behind the storm-door something happened that often happens in the case of sweethearts.

Mr. Dunstan didn't see it. Perhaps it wasn't any of his business, anyway.

Then——

"Good night, Kit!"

"Good night, dear!"

THE END.

There are many forms of winter sport that the average American boy hasn't touched as yet. What would you think of living for a whole week in snow-houses—and living royally at that? It's a great life for hardy youngsters. "FRANK MANLEY'S WINTER CAMP; OR, THE ESQIMAUX BOYS FROM WOODSTOCK," will be printed complete in No. 24 of "Frank Manley's Weekly," out next week You can't afford to miss this great story!

SPECIAL NOTICE. All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain them from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

PRACTICAL TALKS ON TRAINING

By "Physical Director"

No. 55.

Coasting as a part of the physical training scheme?

Oh, yes, certainly. Why not?

There are many benefits that coasting, wisely indulged in, will bring to the body and nerves.

Yet do not let the indolent boy suppose that coasting, frequently indulged in, is sufficient by way of physical training for the whole winter season.

Coasting has its place and does its part in the scheme of outdoor exercise—that's all.

The exhilaration of slipping down hill over a fast track at the rate of many, many miles an hour, is good for any youngster.

Then comes the long climb back up the hill, dragging the sled or double-runner.

That's the best part of all.

An enthusiastic coaster tramps many miles in an afternoon of the sport.

Best of all, this tramping takes the form of hill climbing. A boy who coasts all afternoon does an amount of hill climbing that is equal to scaling a high mountain.

Moreover, he gets this hill climbing in the form in which it will do him the most good; that is, in rather small doses, with a sensible rest between each climb.

Therefore, while coasting appears to be nothing but fun, pure and simple, I am willing to go on record as saying that, in my belief, there is no winter sport that gives better returns in health and good spirits.

Set a boy to climbing a mountain as a matter of physical training, and the first time he will tackle it with enthusiasm, because it is a "new stunt."

The second time he will climb that mountain more as a matter of duty—because it is good for his physical body.

There will be quite an interval before the young man climbs the mountain for the third time. Most boys will not make the third attempt.

But give a boy a sled and an afternoon off, and he will go out for an afternoon of solid enjoyment; and, incidentally, he will climb a mountain, too—in small doses—without thinking anything about it.

Do you cheer and yell—yell like a Commanche Indian—when you are out coasting?

I hope you do, for it's good for you. Yelling expands and toughens the lungs and builds up strong throat and vocal cords. Cowboys, who have to yell across long reaches of mesa, are not prone to lung troubles. Neither are mountaineers who have to call from peak to peak or from hill to valley.

Never mind the grumpy old individual who says that your yelling is ear-splitting. He never had any physical training in his boyhood, and what he needs now is a rest-cure—somewhere else.

If you are unfortunate enough to have to coast in a city, and the policeman, egged on by some complaining individual, asks you to stop your yelling, show him this Talk, and explain that you're engaged in building up sound lungs to be used by the policemen, firemen and soldiers of the future. Then it's ten to one the policeman won't want you to stop your yelling. If he does, however, then send a polite, well-behaved delegation to see his superior officer at the station-house. After that, I don't believe any one will be able to interfere with your expanding your lungs while sliding down hill.

Do you know where American boys are likely to be weak—and city boys almost sure to be?

In the legs! The measurements sent to me by my young correspondents show this as surely as anything else could do.

There is weakness in the thighs. How many boys, for instance, can place a football, tightly filled with air, between the legs, just below the crotch, and then, by drawing the legs strongly together, press that football all out of shape?

Yet a properly developed boy of seventeen should be strong enough to burst a football by the pressure between his legs.

Weak, under-developed calves are almost universal.

Yet mountain climbing would correct weakness of thighs and of lower legs. If you can't get mountain climbing, or it doesn't appeal to you sufficiently, then two or three hours of busy coasting in a day will give you just the same benefit.

And then the lungs and the chest expansion! The boy who has a chest expansion an inch above the standard for his age, weight and height, has made a big start toward a long and healthy life.

With ample chest expansion the lungs will take care of themselves. My young friends, go in for chest expansion first of all. Work and work to build up that chest of yours.

Coasting, with its brisk hill-climbing, does a whole lot for chest expansion.

When you are climbing, keep your chin as well up as you can, and take in the greatest gulps possible of the pure, frosty air.

Coasting brings an all-around benefit to the nerves. In the first place, there is the pleasant and not too strenuous excitement, which is wonderfully good for the nerves.

Then the fresh air, and so much of it, with all the brisk exercise, is certain to bring you good sleep at night.

This fine sleep does wonders in resting, refreshing and restoring your nervous powers.

Letters from Readers

NOTICE.—Write letters for this page on only one side of the paper. Number your questions. Do not ask questions on the same paper containing mail orders. Immediate answers cannot be given, as "Frank Manley's Weekly" is printed several weeks ahead of the date of issue. Address all questions for this department to "Physical Director," No. 24 Union Square, New York.

541 W. First St., Marion, Ind., Oct. 15, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

I am a reader of the Frank Manley Weekly. I wish you to criticize my measurements and tell me what I am weak in. Neck, 9 inches; chest, expanded, 29½ inches; chest, normal, 27½ inches; wrist, 5½ inches; ankle, 7½ inches; thigh, 10¾ inches; calf, 10 inches; biceps, 8 inches; shoulder to shoulder, 13 inches; elbow, 7½ inches; weight, 81 pounds; height, 4 feet 7 inches. Tell if these stories are true. Hoping this will be printed, I remain, yours truly,

Philip Holman.

I would advise you to develop the neck, first of all, as described in No. 29 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. These stories are founded on fact! Who dares to say that they are not?

Mobile, Ala., October 16, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

Having read a great many books I think I am capable to judge which is the best and Frank Manley's Weekly is first on the list. I especially like the home-made boy idea and also the explaining of the various athletic exercises. As a favor please answer my questions. My measurements are: Chest, contracted, 27 inches; chest, normal, 28 inches; chest, expanded, 30 inches; waist, 26 inches; neck, 11½ inches; right arm, normal, 8½ inches; right arm, flexed, 9½ inches; left arm, normal, 8 inches; left arm, flexed, 9¼ inches; forearms, 9 inches; wrist, 6 inches; right thigh, 16½ inches; left thigh, 16 inches; right calf, 11½ inches; left calf, 11¼ inches; height, 5 feet 5¾ inches; weight, 101 pounds; age, 18 years. I do not use any tobacco or any alcoholic drinks. (1) How is my chest and how can I improve it? (2) I chin the bar 10 times. How are my arms and how can I improve them? (3) Am I below the average and how can I build up my body generally? (4) Is a double end punching bag a good one? (5) I take cold easily and also have bronchial trouble. How can I get rid of them? (6) What is my special weak points? (7) I go to a Y. M. C. A. gym and take a shower bath after exercise and a plunge in a pool and then dry. Is this beneficial?

Sato.

(1) Not enough expansion. Work at the deep breathing drill in No. 29 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (2) Take up the Manley bag work. (3) You are about 20 pounds under weight. Go in for the whole physical training life, with thorough chewing of food and much time outdoors. (4) All right. (5) Spend more time outdoors; don't "hug the stove" when in the house, and all through the winter sleep with your window a little open. Lack of fresh air causes most colds. (6) Poor neck and lack of chest expansion. (7) Decidedly beneficial!

St. Louis, Mo., October 17, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

Being a constant reader of your wonderful weekly, I have missed only a few of your delightful stories, and wish to express my thanks for the many pleasant hours they have given me. I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. (1) How are my measurements? Age, 15 years 10 months; height, 5 feet 3½ inches in bare feet; weight, 96 pounds in street clothes; neck, 12½ inches; shoulders, 32½ inches; chest, normal, 28½ inches; contracted, 27½ inches; expanded, 31 inches; waist, 26 inches; hips, 29 inches; biceps, relaxed, 8½ inches; tense, 9½ inches; forearms, 9 inches; wrists, 6 inches; thighs, 17 inches; calves, 12½ inches; ankles, 8½ inches; reach of arms, "tip to tip," 5 feet 3½ inches; length of arms 19½ inches, length of legs, 29 inches. (2) What are my weak points? (3) What are my strong ones, if I have any? (4) I gained one inch chest expansion in one month following your deep breathing drill. Is this good? (5) In what number is your stationary running published? (6) I retire at 9:30 or 10, arise at 6, 30 minutes' exercise before retiring and on arising. How is this? (7) What is a good way to gain weight? (8) Is a little candy harmful? I use a Whitley Exerciser and punching bag. Hoping you will advise me at your earliest convenience, I am yours, very respectfully,

C. B. Fort.

(1) A few pounds under weight; another inch of chest expansion desirable; waist too large; other measurements satisfactory. (2) Answered. (3) None especially strong. (4) Good; keep right on with it. (5) No. 23 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (6) Good, but can't you get in an outdoor run at some time through the day? (7) Chew all your food to a pulp before swallowing, drink no beverage with meals, but plenty of water between meals, and get a good deal of sleep. Not if it is really a little. It should be eaten right at the end of a meal.

U. S. S. Illinois, Hampton Roads, Va., October 17, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

I will write you a few lines in regard of your grand weekly, Frank Manley. I think it is one of the finest of weekly magazines and papers. I would like to ask you a few questions and you would oblige me very much by answering. (1) Does wearing light clothes in winter do you any harm? (2) Does drinking water do you any harm at meal time? (3) I sleep in an open place where I get plenty of air and when I wake up in the morning my shoulders are sore and stiff. What is the cause and can I do anything for it? I get plenty of exercise and play ball in all the ports I go to. Well, hoping to see this in one of the finest papers in the world, I remain,

A Frank Manley Sailor Model.

(1) Depends upon your own constitution. If you dress too warmly and "baby" yourself, you are always tender, subject to frequent colds and generally weak. (2) Yes; weakens the digestive juices and delays digestion. (2) The stiffness, I imagine, is due to the fact that you have more and harder work to do than is suited to your present muscular condition, but you will outgrow that. The navy is a fine place in which to build up physical manhood, and I congratulate you. With my greater number of years I can go your pleasant life "one better," for I have seen United States vessels in action in Cuban and Philippine waters.

Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 18, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

I write to send you my improvement since my first letter in Frank Manley's Bunch of Hits. They are now as follows: Neck, 14½ inches; wrists, 7¼ inches; waist, 26 inches; weight, 130 pounds; chest, normal, 34 inches; chest, expanded, 41 inches; chest, contracted, 32 inches; shoulders, broad 18 inches; around 41 inches; forearms 10½ inches; arms, 10 inches; biceps, 12 inches; hips, 34 inches; thighs, 21 inches; calves, 13½ inches; age will be 16 on Oct. 20; ankle, 9 inches; height, 5 feet 6 inches in stocking feet. Records: Running broad jump, 18 feet; standing broad jump, 9 feet; running high jump, 4 feet 8 inches; standing high jump, 3 feet 6 inches; pole vault, 10 feet 5 inches; 100-yard dash, 11 seconds; 5-mile run, 45 minutes; on the 21st I swam 3 miles. I can chin, 2 hands, 24 times; 1 hand, 2 times. I can put up over head, 1 hand, 90 pounds. (1) How are my measurements? (2) How are my records? (3) What's the matter with Hob Prouty? I want to see him in the books again. (4) What is your name and address and are you an American? (5) Do you think I have improved? Hoping you will excuse this long letter and thanking you in advance, with three cheers for yourself, Frank, Inow Sato, Foster, Hal, Joe Winston, Prouty, Hollister, Gaylord, Wallie, McGuire, Tod Owen and all the rest, with Frank Tousey, I remain, yours in health,

Edw. W. Farren

P. S.—How can I enlarge my arms between the wrists and forearm? I am a Philadelphian, "born and bred." Our baseball team was beaten by New York, but we were not playing good.

Measurements are fine, and chest expansion almost marvelous. Records are all good. You are in magnificent condition. Hob will undoubtedly appear again in due time. My name and address are "Physical Director," care of Mr. Tousey. I guess I must be an American, as I was born in this country, have voted several times, and served with the colors in Cuba and the Philippines. Talks along the lines that you mention will all appear in due course. Yes, you have improved greatly. You can increase your forearm measurements by means of any exercise that calls for brisk and rather hard turning of the forearms.

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320 Fifth St., Jersey City, N. J., Aug. 20, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

As I am a constant reader of your fine weekly I take the liberty to ask a few questions. (1) I am 5 feet tall; calves, 13 inches; neck, 13 inches; wrist, 8 inches; weight, 96 pounds in street attire; thigh, 20 inches; ankles, 11 inches; chest, 30 inches; expanded 32 inches. (2) What must I do to grow, and gain weight, wind, strength and quickness? I have severe headaches. What must I do to stop them?

Yours truly, Anthony Wasilewsk.

P. S.—Three cheers for Frank Manley and his club. I am 13 years 12 months old.

Your measurements are very satisfactory, except that you should work for more chest expansion. Go in for a good daily bout of the work with home-made apparatus explained in the first 15 numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. Headaches probably due to not chewing food to a pulp before swallowing. Avoid coffee and tea, and drink no beverage with meals, but plenty of water between meals.

St. Louis, Oct. 21, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

I have read all your stories from the first and think they are O. K. My age is 17 years; weight, 140 pounds; height, 5 feet 8 inches; chest, normal, 33½ inches; expanded, 36 inches; waist, 30 inches. Can you tell me how I can strengthen my back as I am inclined to be round-shouldered? I take plenty of exercise using a Whitley Exerciser, morning and evening, and play football, baseball, etc. Hoping you will answer this promptly and wishing you and your paper success, I remain an admirer,

T. C. L., 1904

Waist about an inch too large, and not enough chest expansion. For your back use the horizontal bar as explained in Frank Tousey's Ten-cent Handbook No. 25, "How to Become a Gymnast."

Springdale, Wash., Oct. 16, 1905.
Dear Physical Director:

I have been taking The Young Athlete's Weekly from first number. I like them better than any other weekly libraries of their kind and will say that there is a good deal of information on physical training in them. I wish to ask you a few questions. I suppose it will be some time before I get an answer, but hope I will see it in print. (1) How am I to get along in health and strength without training, only deep breathing 3 or 4 times a day, from 10 to 24 drills each time; also eating and drinking same as explained in Young Athlete's Weekly? If I do this, would it help me any? (2) I am over 1[illegible] years old; have been eating any old way till last winter when your weeklies came around. I weigh 142 pounds; height, 5 feet [illegible] inches; chest normal, 34 inches; expanded, [illegible] to [illegible]; waist, 32; right wrist, 6½ inches; left, little over 6½ inches. I am left handed. At [illegible] I eat but very little meat and white bread, potatoes about once or twice a week. I can't get whole-wheat flour, so we have Graham instead. (3) [illegible]

am I getting along this way? Better than the old way? (4) I am not good at distance running. I breathe heavily. (5) What exercise would you advise me to take as I want to be strong—about twice as strong as I am now? (6) I am one of the kind who get chilly 'most always on cold mornings and days. How could I cure it by brisk exercising? (7) I take hot water every morning half hour before breakfast. Of late I eat an apple peeled or apple sauce instead of an orange. I live out in the country. I eat Graham bread and milk—warm sometimes—in morning and for supper sometimes. We only have two meals a day. How am I getting along this way? (8) Are pumpkin pies any harm? Hope to see an answer soon. I remain, yours truly,

Devello T. Blanchard.

(1) There is no way of improving health and strength without plenty of exercise, most of it outdoors. (2) Waist is four inches too large. (3) Yes. (4) Improve gradually by persistent practice, never over-straining. (5) The best work for you is that with home-made apparatus as described in the first 15 numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. (6) Brisk exercise is exactly the cure, with at least a sponge bath once a day. (7) The two-meal-a-day plan is best. (8) The principal harm is in the lard in the crust.

Dear Physical Director:

I will here make known my measurements which I think are not very satisfactory to you. Age, 19 years 6 months; height, barefooted, 5 feet 6¾ inches; weight, 139½ pounds; neck, 13¾ inches; shoulders, 40 inches around; chest, normal, 34 inches; chest, expanded, 37½ inches; waist, 28 inches; thigh 19½ inches; calves, 13 inches; wrist, 6½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches; biceps, 10 inches; forearm, 10 inches. How do you like them? I can not chin the bar once with my one arm; can chin 20 times with two arms. Can you tell me how to do the giant swing? It isn't in Manley's books. My breathing is oppressed. I work 8 hours day and night. What are my weak points? Name them. Good-by. Yours truly,

A Constant Reader.

Your measurements are quite satisfactory. The breathing trouble will disappear if you go through the deep breathing drills three or four times a day and sleep the year round with your bed-room window open at least a little. You will find all the horizontal bar work described in Frank Tousey's Ten-cent Handbook No. 25, "How to Become a Gymnast."

Clinton, Ont., Can., October 20, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a reader of your very fine weekly I beg leave for you to consider my measurements. I am 14 years old, weigh 95 pounds; height, 5 feet; chest, contracted, 30 inches, expanded, 33 inches; neck, 13 inches; biceps, 10 inches; wrist, 5½ inches; forearm, 9½ inches; waist, 25½ inches; hips, 31 inches; thigh, 17½ inches; calf, 12 inches; ankle, 7½ inches. (1) Am I too light for my height? (2) How are my measurements? (3) How can I prevent my hair from falling out? (4) How can I get my wind up? (5) How can I become a good pitcher? (6) How can I broaden my shoulders? Thanking you beforehand,

An Admirer.

(1) No. (2) Very good. (3) By giving it a good dry shampoo morning and night, and by letting the outdoor air get into it as much as possible. (4) By deep breathing and distance running, working gradually for good results. (5) By keeping yourself in good all-around physical condition, and by keeping everlastingly at the pitching. (6) Horizontal bar work will gradually accomplish this.

Tremont, Pa., October 22, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being an ardent admirer of your weekly as well as a reader, I take the privilege of asking a few questions. I am a little over 15 years of age, weigh 122 pounds and my height is 5 feet 6 inches; biceps, 10½ inches; forearms, 9¼ inches; chest, normal, 30½ inches; contracted, 29 5-8 inches; expanded, 33 7-8 inches; waist, 29 inches; thigh, 20½ inches; calves, 12¼ inches; around shoulders, 2[illegible] inches. (1) What are my weak points? (2) What are my strong ones, if any? I exercise every morning and evening, but in the straight punches, my left arm cracks at the elbow. Could you tell me the reason of this and give me a set of exercises for morning and evening with the dumbbells, or Indian clubs, or exercises among them to make speed—something I desire? Thanking you in advance, I remain,

A Boy From Tremont.

(1) Waist line about an inch and a half too large. (2) Other measurements generally good. (3) Use Manley's dumbbell drill, explained in No. 23 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. Do the work fast.

Brooklyn, N. Y., October 21, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all of your weeklies and have never read any that are better. I am going to start a club with the boys, and I thought I would ask you for some advice. We have boxing gloves, dumbbells, Indian clubs, and punching bag and horizontal bar. We have tried to get a place as a gymnasium, but could not. If we could we would have concerts and so raise money besides the dues. Could you give us any suggestion of a place to meet? Hoping to hear from you soon I will close with three cheers for Manley and the Up and At 'Em Boys.

Benj. Kanter.

Beyond the apparatus that your club already has, you can make the rest for yourselves by studying the first 15 numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly, making apparatus as the Up and At 'Em Boys did. I can make only very general suggestions about the way to get a meeting place. One is: Why don't you get your church people interested in the idea? Church authorities, nowadays, very generally approve of such clubs and often aid young men to get a suitable meeting place. See the clergymen in your neighborhood.

Chicago, Oct. 21, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read every Frank Manley out and will continue to do so. How are these? Age, 13 years 7 months; height, 5 feet; weight, 84 pounds; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 31¼ inches; biceps, normal, 9½ inches; expanded, 10¾ inches; calves, 12 5-8 inches; neck, 11 inches; waist, 26 inches; wrist, 6 inches; forearm, 9 inches; thigh, 17¼ inches; ankle 7 5-8 inches. (1) If they are not good what exercises should I take? (2) Are they all right compared with height? (3) How can I get exercises without apparatus, as I can not get it? Three cheers for Frank and Kittie, I remain

A Would-be Athlete.

P. S.—Do not put my name in print, please.

(1) Go in for all-around gymnastics, making the apparatus and using it as described in the first 15 numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. (2) Measurements fairly good, but you are several pounds shy on weight. (3) Read answer to first question.

Chicago, Ill., October 22, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I am a constant reader of the Athlete's and Frank Manley's Weekly, and I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. (1) Is Frank Manley a real character? (2) Will you please tell me in what State Woodstock is? That is all I will ask you and I will close with three cheers for the Woodstock Junior Athlete Club and three more for Physical Director. Yours truly,

Tod Owen.

(1) Certainly. (2) As I have frequently assured my readers, Woodstock is in the State of Good Health.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read thirty of the Young Athlete's Weekly and Frank Manley's Weekly and I think they are great. I have seen that boys send in their measurements so I will send mine. Age, 15 years 1 week; height, 5 feet 2¾ inches; weight, 107 lbs.; neck, 23¾ inches; around shoulders, 39 inches; chest, contracted 27¾ inches, normal 29 inches, expanded 32¼ inches; biceps, 8¾ inches, biceps expanded, 10¾ inches; elbow, 9¾ inches; wrist, 6 inches; length of arm and hand, 28 inches; waist, 23¾ inches; hips, 29½ inches; thighs, 18 inches; knee, 13½ inches; calves, 12½ inches, lower part 7½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches; size of shoe, 4; size of hat, 6¾ I can lift above knees with both hands 250 lbs. easy; above head, right hand, 45 lbs.; left hand, 40 lbs. Can chin myself about eight times without great effort. (1) What are my defects and my weak points? (2) What am I built for? (3) Am I below or above the average? (4) What must I do to become a distance runner? (5) What must I do to become strong and have good wind? Yours respectfully,

George Lelman.

Measurements very satisfactory, and also performances, except the chinning, which a young man with your build can improve by degrees.

New York, Oct. 30, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a strong admirer of Frank Manley's Weekly, I take the liberty to ask you one question concerning my blood. I would like to know how to get rid of pimples, as I will not try any salve on my face because it brings them out more? Hoping to see it in your weekly soon, I remain, Yours truly,

M. A. B.

The only way that I can advise you to improve your blood is to eat sensible food—nothing rich or greasy, and no candy or pastry. Chew all your food to a fine pulp before swallowing. Drink no beverages with meals, or for half an hour afterward. Drink water freely between meals. Exercise plentifully outdoors, and sleep with your window open at all times of the year.

Clinton, Me., Oct. 25, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I am a constant reader of your famous weekly, which all young men who wish to succeed in life should read. And I am now going to ask a few questions and give my measurements: Age, 16 years; height, 6 feet; weight, 155 pounds; chest, normal 34 inches, expanded 37 inches; thighs, 20½ inches; calves, 15 inches; ankles, 9½ inches; biceps, normal 10½ inches, expanded 12 inches; wrists, 7½ inches. (1) How are my measurements? (2) What are my weak and strong points? (3) I sometimes work nights and sleep days, in a mill. Is that bad? I have been following your training rules as to diet. (4) Are corn-meal and berries good for an athlete? (5) What can I do to make my arms strong so that I can lift a great weight? Thanking you in advance, I remain, Yours truly,

A. S. R.

Measurements very good. Corn-meal should not be used too often in the diet. The way to strengthen the arms is on the horizontal bar, at the punching-bag, on the trapeze, and, in general, any exercise that uses the arms briskly.

New York, Oct. 28, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read Frank Manley's Weekly, I take the liberty to ask a few questions. I am 16 years 6 months old; weight, 122½ pounds; height, 5 feet 7½ inches; shoulders, across, 17½ inches; waist, 30 inches; neck, 13½ inches; chest, normal 32½ inches, expanded 34½ inches; wrists, 6½ inches; forearm, 9¾ inches; biceps, 10 inches; ankles 9 inches; calves, 13 inches; thighs, 18 inches. (1) Are my measurements good? (2) If not, what can I do to better them? (3) Am I in proportion? I remain, Yours truly,

Vernon B. Smith,
113 W. 50th St.

Waist too large, chest expansion not sufficient. Otherwise measurements are very good.

Camden, N. J., Nov. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

As a reader of your weekly I would like to know how you think my measurements are, and kindly tell me my weak points. I am 18 years old; weight, 128 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¾ inches; neck, 15½ inches; shoulders, 18¼ inches; chest, normal 33 inches; expanded 35½ inches; biceps, normal 10¼ inches, expanded 12½ inches; wrists, 7⅛ inches; waist, 28 inches; thighs, 19 inches; calves, 13¼ inches. Is five miles too long to run after working all day?

G. W.

Your measurements are all very good, with the exception that you should have at least an inch more chest expansion, and you are ten or twelve pounds light. A five-mile run is not too long for you

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